

PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER (IN) COMPETENCE: PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' VOICES

By

ANGELINE FIKILE MFEKA

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Supervisor: Professor V. Chikoko

SUPERVISORS' STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval

Professor V. Chikoko

Date

ABSTRACT

The deterioration of learner performance in basic education has fuelled the drawing up of professional standards of teachers. The literature has revealed that South Africa is experiencing a decline in the standards of teaching and learning due to major changes that have taken place in the country's education system. The Department of Education's endeavours to improve curriculum and assessment have caused distraction for teachers, as they spend more time doing paper work and less time on teaching. This study explored the views and experiences of teachers about their (in) competence in three primary schools in Zululand District, in the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. A qualitative research approach was adopted and data were generated by means of semi structured interviews, observations and document analysis. Data were then presented and discussed through constant comparative method. The results of the study are as follows:

- Participants revealed that teaching is not just knowing ones subject or having correct competencies but is also charged with emotions as they connect with their learners and fill their teaching and learning with creativity, enthusiasm, risk and a challenge. Challenged emotional state of a teacher results in a teacher being incompetent. They expressed their views that to a large extent, their competencies were negatively influenced by various factors in the school environment. The empirical findings revealed that Principals as instructional leaders, can give rise to learning schools. In-service training and staff developments are crucial in keeping teachers up to date with the current approaches and strategies pertaining to teaching and learning. Based on these findings, it was therefore recommended that teachers, more importantly HODs and Principals, should engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in order to share challenges and experiences and find informed solutions.

Key terms: Competence; commitment, personal mastery, internal accountability; School Management Team; teacher; learner; change;

DECLARATION

I, Angeline Fikile Mfeka, student number 214581974, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Perspectives on teacher (in) competence: Primary school teachers’ voices” is my own original work and that all sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: _____

Angeline Fikile Mfeka

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Supervisor Professor V. Chikoko

Date: _____

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Durban



26 October 2015

Mrs Angeline Fikile Mfeka 214581974
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mfeka

Protocol reference number: HSS/1216/015M

Project title: Perspectives on teacher (in) competence: Primary school teachers' voices

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 28 August 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor V Chikoko
cc. Academic Leader: Prof P Morojele
cc. School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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Acronyms

GET	General Education and Training
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
ANA	Annual National Assessment
HOD	Head of Department
PL-1	Post Level 1
SMT	School Management Team
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SASA	South African Schools Act

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction of the study

Public concern over the quality of education in public schools in South Africa and the increasing pressure on teachers to improve overall learner performance, made the study on teacher competence well timed. In this study perspectives on teacher competence are discussed with emphasis on what primary school teachers are saying regarding their teaching competencies. This chapter provides the background and the purpose of the study. It also provides the rationale for the study followed by key research questions, significance, scope and limitations of the study. It concludes with the outline of the entire dissertation.

1.2 The background and the purpose of the study

This is a qualitative study done in three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, in the District of Zululand. The study investigated teachers' perspectives about their teaching competencies in the plight of outcry about their general performance in South African schools. The study also sought to explore how teachers frame the concept of competence.

A national outcry has been on for quite a long time as far as teacher competence in public schools is concerned. Communities want schools in their proximity to perform well. Therefore the provision of quality education, particularly those schools serving poor communities, depends on the quality of the educators. According to Spaull (2013), teacher competence has been highly questioned, as learners, mostly from the former disadvantaged black schools, cannot read, write nor compute at the grade-appropriate level. "South Africa continues to battle the challenge of under-performance in schools that are predominantly situated in socio-economically unfavourable settings"(Itumeleng & Oupa, 2014, p. 475). Shalem and Hoadley (2009) and Spaull

(2013) also noted that diminishing teacher confidence, linked with significantly poor learner achievement in standardised tests and national assessments, have always been reported as one of the harmful issues in South African Education. As South Africa continues to participate in numerous local and international tests of educational achievements, its performance is not good at all. Taylor (2008) reveals that it is one of the worst performing of the developing countries.

Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) posit that to diagnose such problems, in order to improve performance in South African Schools, Annual National Assessments, the nationally-standardised tests were implemented by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for all grades in the General Education and Training Band (GET Band). As far as these tests are concerned, there is an ongoing debate on poor learner performance in relation to teacher competence. According to Taylor (2008) and Spaul (2013), one of the reasons for such poor learner performance is that teachers themselves perform below average. Taylor highlights the evidence that was collected during a survey conducted among Maths teachers who were randomly selected from primary schools in rural areas. The results of this survey showed that teachers were unable to answer questions aimed at their learners. Primary school teachers have been seen as not laying the good foundation for secondary education. Chisolm (2004) declares that despite the move to improve education in South Africa, it is confirmed that learning in primary schools that are predominantly in black communities, remain poor. This is conjoined with the drop-out rate of learners in black schools and undoubtedly, has an influence on the learner performance in the Senior Certificate examination. This revealed that teachers were not performing at their best level.

Currently, there is a vibrant political pressure put on teachers and school management to judge their quality of work through learner performance. According to Coombe (as cited in Mestry, Hendricks, & Bischoff, 2009, p. 475) a huge portion of the national education budget is spent on teachers' remuneration and thus, the Department of Education is expecting a level of high performance from teachers. It is agreeable that the culture of teaching and learning has been severely affected by the legacy of the past apartheid government which among other things, was characterised by societal inequalities, the unequal distribution of resources and the involvement of teaching

fraternity in political turmoil. This badly dented the competencies of teachers who found themselves caught in between, as conditions of that time forced them to participate in sit-ins, go-slows and stay-aways.

However, education reforms or changes have been gradually implemented to rectify the inequity perpetuated by the apartheid regime and also to improve results. The Department of Education implemented numerous changes in policies and legislations. Smith and Ngoma-Maema (as cited in Masoge & Taunuyane, 2012, p. 180) stated that since the onset of a democratic dispensation in 1994, the South African government has commenced educational changes that were directed to the provision of quality education for all learners, in spite of their backgrounds or circumstances. Following are some of the policies and legislations implemented by the Department. Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) (EEA) (Africa, 1998) was implemented to administer the employment of teachers in the country. Zengele (2009) points out that EEA provides for the conditions under-which educators employed by the State are regulated. Outcomes Based Education was part of the transformation implemented to improve curriculum and approach to education, which encouraged active learner participation, as opposed to teacher-centred approach of the apartheid education. Jansen and Christie (1999) outline Outcomes Based Education (OBE) as a student-centred, results-oriented perspective that underpinned Curriculum 2005 which was introduced in 1997. According to Msila (2007), OBE was introduced to meet the global norm in the realm of Mathematics and Science and to create a united, democratic and prosperous country. "OBE was based on three premises outlined as follows :all learners perform successfully, but not at the same pace, each successful learning experience is a stepping stone to more success, schools are pivotal in creating the conditions for success at school" (Ramdeo, 2010, p. 39). Msila (2007) attests that later, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was launched as a means of improving Outcomes Based Curriculum. The author posits that RNCS aimed at achieving goals that are incorporated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. RNCS, according to Msila (2007), represented the kind of education that committed itself to bringing change in South Africa. Although teachers have been viewed as authoritarian figures, they were expected to be instant promoters of democracy. Owen-Smith (2012) highlights the execution of the new curriculum known

as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012. The author describes CAPS as a single and all-inclusive policy document that substituted Subject and Learning Area Statements of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The on-going changes in curriculum and policies among other things, exerted more pressure on teachers, thus, impacting negatively on their competencies.

According to Council 2003, amongst the changes implemented was an appraisal system known as Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). The system was designed by ELRC in 2003. Nkambule (2010) posits that IQMS aimed at identifying specific needs for teachers, with a view of providing support for continued growth. However, the author indicates ineffectiveness in the implementation of IQMS. The main reason was that teachers would not reveal their areas of weaknesses as they feared that they will run a risk of getting lower scores and not qualify for salary progression. Therefore, IQMS was one of the frustrating changes imposed on the teachers. According to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development notice (367 of 2007), the then Minister of Education, Dr Naledi Pandor, endorsed the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) to ensure that teachers receive continued growth in order to meet the demands of the democratic South Africa. Seemingly, the well-meant changes brought about frustration and uncertainty among teachers.

As a Principal and a subject teacher, the researcher has been in a good position of observing and experiencing the good and the bad of the teaching profession. Day and GU (2010) confirm that many teachers across the world enter the teaching profession with a strong passion for teaching, but fall along the way. Due to pressure and challenges, they endure in their career. The researcher has seen a number of experienced teachers leaving the teaching profession for other lucrative careers. According Peltzer et al. (2005), the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) report on educator supply and demand in South Africa, indicated that teaching conditions, amongst which include long working hours that extend to after hours and holidays, expansion of duties and roles of teachers coupled with high job stress, have led to teachers being dissatisfied with their job, resulting in many quitting the profession.

Cuban (2007) maintains that critics have seen teachers as just opposing change and not striving to improve their results. Day and GU (2010) posit that effective teaching is not only determined by the quality of teachers, but also by the environment in which they work. From the background given, it has thus been highlighted that teachers were compelled to change from the traditional approaches of teaching they were used to, to the new approaches they were not used to. The question is, was enough done to prepare them for the drastic transformation. Drastic changes, coupled with factors such as disruptive students, excessive paperwork and burdensome workload, all lead to uncertainty and reduced self-confidence in teachers, resulting in them assigning a range of negative meanings. Notwithstanding all of the factors mentioned above, under-performance of learners in schools is solely blamed on teachers. “Difficulty in carefully defining the duties of educators is also stressful and contributes to a lack of personal accomplishment which reduces their feeling of success” (Naidoo, Botha and Bischoff, 2013, p. 179). These factors have left teachers frustrated, insecure and uncertain, thereby resorting to leaving the system.

The world at large has great expectations of teachers. It is with no doubt that teachers are regarded as having great influence on the future of the society. This is the case, as they play a crucial role in moulding and guiding prospective future generations. Put differently, teachers are not only viewed as teaching children, but also, as people tasked to teach the nation as a whole. The society sets standards within which teachers must operate in order to be regarded as competent enough to execute this essential task. Quality teaching among the set standards, is displayed through learners’ achievement. Govender (2012) attests that teachers are amongst the many moulding environmental factors exercising their abundant effect on children, yet they play a crucial role as they are deliberately, systematically, purposefully and consciously devoted to forming the children’s characters. The world expects teachers to act as inter-agents between the real world and the world of learning. As leaders to young people, teachers ought to effectively carry out their professional duty by leading and guiding their learners to the best of their expertise. Muijs, Kyriakides, van der Werf, Creemers, Timperly, and Earl (2014) state that the diversity in pupils’ outcomes is largely explained by what teachers do in class. Looking at the above-mentioned, it has

been revealed with no doubt that despite all other factors, learner performance relies largely on teacher competence.

Against the given background it is apparent that the social and policy context in which the school exists, are likely to have a lot of influence upon teachers' competencies. While the policies developed reflected the views of the majority of South Africans, the actual implementation of all the policies and changes would not be easy on teachers. Clearly, nothing much has been researched about the teachers' perspectives on their teaching competencies. In that view, this study took a closer look at how teachers perceived their teaching competencies within the contexts in which they operate.

1.3 Rationale for the study

As a Principal, and a subject teacher, the researcher's personal experience has made her aware that teachers are faced with so many challenges which have impacted on their competencies. Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) state that schools are places for the transmission of knowledge and power. As teachers are guardians and executors of this knowledge and power, it is crucial that teachers' competencies are of high quality. On that note, this study sought to capture the lived experiences of teachers in a school situation: what they think affects their competencies and also how they think their competencies might be enhanced. Conducting this study provided some insights with regards to the general state of school performance in South Africa.

1.4 Research questions

The questions below intended to address the main topic namely: Perspectives on teacher (in) competence: The primary school teachers' voices.

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their ability to demonstrate competence in the classroom practice?
2. What factors affect their teaching competencies?
3. How could the teachers' competencies be enhanced?
4. What are the lessons from the teachers' perceptions of their performance?

1.5 Significance of the study

Since 1992, when the researcher was employed as a teacher for the first time, she has experienced so many changes as an individual. The researcher has been observing the pressures, the uncertainties and the loss of identity, the change that has been brought to teachers' overtime. In all the changes incurred in the department of education, teachers were not granted sufficient opportunity for adaptation and preparedness. On the same note the performance of learners in schools is often directly associated with the competencies of the teacher. Most teachers have lost courage and confidence in performing their duties at all levels of operation within their schools. The South African government, desperate to correct the imbalances of the apartheid era, enforced many changes that negatively impacted on the teachers' professionalism and work morale. According to Gallie, Sayed, and Williams (1997), the new educational system put into place after the 1994 elections places exceptional demands on teachers as key agents of change. The exodus of experienced and seasoned teachers, is evident of the teachers' desperation and loss of hope due to the pressure exerted on them. This leaves the whole nation with unanswered questions about the preservation and the future of the teaching fraternity. Poor Matric and ANA results give rise to the question of whether the teachers are doing their best to yield quality results. The Department continues to strictly mandate teacher instruction, leaving Principals to primarily bring to terms disputes between their staff and the Department. It is with no doubt that teachers feel like too much pressure is put solely on them, while the fact that education is a triangular practice that demands full participation of the teacher, the learner and the parent, is not taken into cognisance.

Despite countless factors that might badly influence results, school Principals are held accountable for their schools' performance. In the absence of rapid developments in the management area, South Africa's Black schools have remained disadvantaged, while for their White counterparts have continued to grow and thrive (Gallie, Sayed, & Williams, 1997, p. 462). The authors argue that this diversity of management practices has led to the perception that White schools maintain better school organisation with

the best learning culture than the Black schools. Such a perception has led to increasing numbers of Black learners seeking enrolment in White schools.

Heads of Departments (HODs) who are products of disorganised pre-service preparation, ineffective in-service instruction and pedagogical insularity of the past teacher training, are forced to come up with strategies to improve the quality of performance in their respective departments, yet very little has been done to empower them with the effective strategies to develop teachers in order to cater for the learners' diverse cognitive needs. Little has also been said as to whether development and support given by subject advisors to teachers, is efficient enough to empower the teachers with subject content and knowledge, thereby enhancing their competencies. Against this background, an investigation into lived experiences of teachers was embarked on.

1.6 The scope of the study

This study investigated the perceptions of teachers regarding their competencies. The teachers in this study refer to Post level 1 educators (PL-1) and the Head of departments (HODs).

The study took place within the Zululand District in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The Circuit Management Centre is divided into five circuits that hosts a total number of 168 schools. The study took place in a circuit that has a total number of 22 primary schools.

1.7 Limitations

This was a small scale study involving only three schools in one circuit, therefore, findings of this study cannot be generalised in other situations. As participation was voluntary, withdrawal of the participants from the study was inevitable. Time was limited in the sense that, if interviews were done during school hours, interference with notional time and teaching and learning was unavoidable. Based on these limitations, the researcher requested the schools to give her the time they felt comfortable with. It

was agreed that interviews would be conducted after school hours. This gave rise to negativity from some of the participants as they felt like their private time was invaded. Structured observations required practice. During observations, teachers were notified of the whole procedures. To record accurate observation data, the researcher used audio tape recorder and video recorder, which sometimes presented some problems. The study was confined to a small percentage of educators per school. One other restriction was that there was an exclusion of the perception of other stakeholders like parents.

1.8 Definition of key terms

Certain terms feature prominently in this study. Below is a description of some of the concepts that are often used in this study.

1.8.1 Voice

In education, the term voice refers to the values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives and cultural backgrounds of the people in a school, district or school community, especially teachers, students, parents or local citizens, as well as the degree to which those values, opinions, beliefs and perspectives are considered, included, listened to and acted upon when important decisions are being made (edglossary.org/teacher-voice). Teachers' voice in this study therefore refers to opinions, perspectives, cultural background and beliefs of teachers working in a school.

1.8.2 A teacher / educator

A teacher/educator is a person who delivers educational program, assesses and provides consistent and substantial leadership (Queensland College of teachers, 2014). He/she is a male or female who teaches in class and consistently strives to enhance learners' comprehension of a topic. Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay (2000) attest that a teacher is a person who, according to the National Education Policy Act (27 of 1996) is bound to fulfil seven roles of being an intermediary, pastoral role player, a manager, a designer of learning programmes, a lifelong learner, a

community builder and a citizen. A teacher in this study refers all school based educators from post level 1 educators to the School Management Team (SMT)

1.8.3 School Management Team (SMT)

SMT refers to School Management Team, *which* represents the school's management structure which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and for putting the school's policies into operation (Ndou, 2009, p. 15). The SMT consists of a Principal and middle managers like the Deputy Principal and the Heads of departments (HODs)

1.8.4 A Learner

A learner refers to a scholar who receives education in a school, a primary or secondary school. A Progressed Learner refers to a learner who did not meet the pass requirements but was conditionally condoned to a next grade.

1.8.5 Competence

It has been argued that reducing the multiple skills and competencies employed in a professional practice to pre-specified, observable work actions or behaviours, is educationally unsound McNamara (2013). Kane (1992) as cited in McNamara (2013), declares that what is being evaluated as professional competence is the extent to which one can utilise knowledge, skills and judgments in relation to the profession, in order to adequately perform in the jurisdiction of possible difficult experiences that define the range of professional practice.

However, competence, as defined by White (1959), is an organism's ability to productively collaborate with its environment. In the same manner, Nordenbo, Larsen, Tiftikci, Wendt and Ostergaard (2008) define it as the knowledge, abilities and attitudes that contribute to the untangling of difficult issues or completing given tasks. Wood

and Olivier (2008) point out that intrinsic motivation, reflective practice and positive interaction with the environment, are related concepts that subsume competence.

According to Baughman, Brumm, and Mickelson (2012), competencies are categorised into five classes namely analysis and judgement, communication, initiative, continuous learning and team work. Therefore, competence is an amalgamation of expertise, mastery, work values, motivation and self-evaluation to attain highest performance.

1.8.6 Personal mastery

According to Spencer and Patrick (2009) personal mastery refers to the degree to which people feel they have control over forces that in a way influence the way they live

1.8.7 Internal accountability

Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) define internal accountability as the extent to which teachers in an institution share a common understanding of what constitutes effective and quality teaching, who is responsible for students' learning and who is accountable for good learner academic achievement.

1.8.8 Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

According to Bhengu and Gounder (2011), Professional Learning Communities refer to the environments in which teachers interact and engage in matters relating to their teaching profession and the ways that they can adopt to enhance the standards of teaching and learning.

1.8.9 Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning, according to Bhengu and Gounder (2011), means learning together, working and helping each other towards the attainment of good results.

1.8.10 Section 20 and Section 21 schools

According to Prinsloo (2005) **section 20** is a status granted to the schools in which the School Governing Body (SGB) is required to keep school buildings and school grounds in good order. However, school funds would be under the administration of the Department. Schools in this regard are only allowed to procure their needs through the Department. On the other hand, **section 21** is a status given to schools through the South African Schools Act. This part of the Act provides that the School Governing Body be granted with all the functions of maintaining and controlling all school facilities, including the handling of funds. In this way, schools are allowed to procure their needs on their own.

1.8.11 Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools

Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, according to Reschovsky (2006), are schools that are regarded as poor as they enrol learners who are mostly from low income families. Quintile 1 is regarded as the poorest of the poor. These schools are no fee paying schools, meaning that the learners are exempted from paying school fees.

1.8.12 Change

Van Tonder (2004) asserts that **change** is a process that modifies the condition of an object at a given point in time, to a different condition at a later stage. According to Ndou (2009), change refers to an organised, coherent process affected by individuals and which takes time to yield fruits. In short, change is a process that modifies an object from its original condition to a different form and character. Fullan (1993) states that teachers who appreciate and embrace change and its comprehensive character, find means of coping. It is agreeable that those coping with change meet the desired level of competence than those who are not coping.

On the other hand, **educational change/reform** is the name given to the goal of changing public education. It is the change in education to make it more effective with a great focus on closing the gap between racial and economic divides. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.Education-reform>. Robinson (2002) suggests that teacher reform means the upgrade of the practice of teaching, with a view to improving student learning.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one: *Introduction and background of the study*

In this chapter, the introduction of the study is highlighted. It describes the background and purpose, rationale and focus of the study, key research questions and the significance of the study, the context of the study and the limitations of the study. The chapter also highlights definitions of key terms.

Chapter two: *Literature Review*

Literature review focuses on the relevant literature used to describe the focus and the outcomes of the study. It examines theories of competence, development and those of management.

Chapter three: *Research Methodology*

This chapter explains the research design and methodology of the study. It reports that the study used semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis for the collection of data.

Chapter four: *Data Presentation and discussion*

This chapter presents data and discusses the findings in order to give meaning to the mass of generated data.

Chapter five: *Summary, conclusions and recommendations*

This chapter summarises, concludes the study and makes recommendations, based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets to review the literature on teacher competence. The focus is on how teachers view their (in) competence and how that reflects on learner achievement. Firstly, the researcher examines the definition of a concept of competence, as teacher competence is the basis of this study. The concept of change is also described in order to provide a clear understanding of how the process of change influences teacher competence. Secondly, it is important to deliberate on what the international and local scholars promulgate about teacher competence. Thirdly, relevant theories that have a bearing on this study are reviewed and these include the mastery theory, programmes theory, revitalised competency model, self-efficacy model and Vygotsky socio-cultural theory. Fourthly, this chapter discusses Bronfenbrenner Ecological Models of Human Development, theory of instructional leadership and theory of collegiality which constitute the theoretical framework and how these relate to the competencies of teachers.

2.2 Key concepts

2.2.1 The concept of competence

Competence is a complex concept which holds no single definition. Saunders and Race (1992) define competence as the ability to perform occupational activities and to display knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin effective performance to the standard expected in that occupation. In agreement with the above, Nordenbo et al. (2008), in their study about teacher competence and pupils' achievement, harmonise with White (1959) who also defines competence as an individual's capacity to transfer knowledge, abilities and attitudes in solving problems and completing tasks, thereby effectively interacting with his/her environment. These authors reveal that teacher competencies incorporate their behaviour. In that view, Nordenbo et al. (2008) classify competence into 3 categories as follows:

a) Relational competence

Nordenbo et al. (2008) indicate that a positive interaction between a teacher and a learner is referred to as relational competence. This is a kind of competence that a teacher should possess in order to develop good relationship between him/her and the learners. The social interaction between a teacher and a learner has a significant outcome as far as learner performance is concerned. Masher (2012) concurs with this when asserting that teachers are powerful fundamentals in classrooms that can humanise or dehumanise learners as they create a learning environment that is suitable for individual learners. In this era, where learners' attitudes towards schooling have changed and where teachers' prestige is diminishing in an alarming rate, this study investigated the impact of teacher-learner relationship on the competencies of teachers.

b) Rule Management competence

Nordenbo et al. (2008) posit that learners' behaviour is positively managed when rules are clearly set and consistently enforced, not in a punitive manner, but such that they motivate and instil self-regulatory behaviour in learners. The involvement of learners when rules are set make them own the rules. The teacher ensures proper functioning of the class by maintaining order and punctuality in every classroom activity. In this present study, the researcher investigated how set rules assist in maintaining classroom discipline and how that assists teachers to perform to their maximum best.

c) Didactic competence

Teachers' understanding of knowledge and skills of a subject content is of paramount importance. "Cognitive subject knowledge" relates to the teacher's theoretical understanding of the subject taught, while 'practical subject skills' relate to the management of those skills as demanded by the subject (Nordenbo et al. 2008, p. 56). These authors reveal that teachers with high level of subject knowledge possess a lot more confidence in their classroom practice. Such teachers are able to plan their teaching according to clear set of goals, they use a variety of strategies to impart knowledge and to accommodate diverse learner needs. This bears a positive

contribution in the overall performance of learners. Different studies about competence reveal that no single strategy is good. Thus, a variety of strategies used according to different needs of learners, coupled with motivation, leads to high learner performance. According to these authors, effective teachers who ensure strict adherence to noble evaluation strategies strengthen the learners' ability to perform well. In her experience as a Primary school teacher, the researcher has seen primary school teachers teaching subjects in which they have little or no didactic knowledge, for example mathematics and technology. How understanding of subject content and the knowledge of effective teaching strategies affect teacher competence, was an area of interest in this study and was investigated.

Nordenbo et al. (2008) further highlight other forms of competence which the researcher thinks are relevant to this study and these are formal and staff competencies. These are described below.

i) Formal competence

Formal competence refers to an individual's ability to acquire a certificate of formal training, thereby acquiring an authorised right to practice the profession trained for. Though it is believed that formal competence has very little to do with how learners perform, Nordenbo et al. highlight the importance of teachers acquiring formal training as granting them confidence to practice what they do in class. This current study investigated the influence of formal training and qualifications on the teachers' classroom practices.

ii) Staff competence

On top of his/her academic qualification, an individual possesses work experience, social background, classroom management, commitment and the way an individual communicates with others. Good human relations enable teachers to network with other staff members, which can have a positive influence in the enhancement of the teachers' competencies.

Over and above what Nordenbo et al. (2008) highlighted as aspects of competence, the researcher sees the study about maturity as an aspect of professional commitment in the management of teacher competence by Mkhize (2012), relevant to her study. Mkhize (2012) talks of factors that are part of teacher competence, namely the learning environment, professional commitment, order and discipline, educational foundation of a teacher, co-operative ability and efficiency and leadership styles. Mkhize describes professional commitment as the individual teacher's ability to identify with the goals and the values of a school, with an intention to maintain organisational membership and become involved in the job beyond personal interest. Thus, Mkhize suggests the following four key aspects of competence:

1) Technical task or skills

Knowledge and skills that enable the teacher to perform the core function of his or her role.

2) Contingency management skills

A skill that enables a teacher to operate under unforeseen circumstances and pressures encountered in his/her job role.

3) Task management skills

Overlapping skills that integrate the technical and task components into the teacher's overall work role.

4) Job, role or environment skills

Skills used to integrate job role within the wider context of the school and the social environment in which the school exists.

A teacher in possession of the afore-mentioned competencies is said to be effective in his/her classroom practice. Thus, this study explored the possession and the display of the above capabilities. Maturity and commitment in performing one's duties were among the capabilities that this study investigated.

In agreement with Nordenbo et al. (2008) and Mkhize (2012), Jones (1994) as cited in Masher (2012) in the study about order and discipline in the management of teacher

competence, suggests that competence can be defined as an individual's capability to excellently plan, organise and execute activities within an occupation. Masher further reveals that competence is an individual's ability, who, in possession of sufficient knowledge, skills, attitude and experience, can effectively and efficiently execute his or her professional role for a desired performance. According to Masher, teachers know that for learning to successfully take place, order and discipline must be maintained. The author further suggests that if teachers accommodate order and discipline in their teaching range, they can cultivate the mood for learning and success, such that more time is spent on teaching and learning. How order and discipline affect the ways in which teachers practice in class was also an area of interest and was therefore investigated in this current study.

In the study about personal mastery as an aspect of leadership, Govender (2012) defines competence as an immense concept that actualises the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new situations. Kane (2012), as cited in McNamara (2013), agrees with Govender by attesting that competence is the degree to which one is able to effectively demonstrate one's skills, knowledge and judgements in a setting that defines the professional practice. Meanwhile, in the study about the development of self-efficacy model, in an attempt to help teachers become effective instructors, Wood and Olivier (2008) concur with the afore-mentioned definitions and emphasised that the incorporation of intrinsic motivation, reflective practice and positive interaction with the environment, subsumes competence. When studying the extrinsic and intrinsic values in the work place, McGrath (2012) shares the same sentiments that individual competencies and differences in work values, have been investigated in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations. The author further noted that these differences are explained in that some employees view their jobs as opportunities to exercise their competencies and skills, such that their work is socially meaningful and yields greater personal satisfaction, while others' main objective is financial gain.

This suggests that teachers who positively interact with their environment are intrinsically motivated and are determined to try new things, thereby enhancing their competencies. Such teachers are undoubtedly open to growth and change. In that

view, this study sought to explore the values to which teachers attach their profession that is to find out what exactly made them choose the teaching profession. Undoubtedly, what intrinsically or extrinsically motivated them to perform to their maximum best in the classroom was investigated in this study. School achievement is a joint effort. Thus, how teachers in and out of school relate to each other plays a crucial role. The impact that human relations bear on how teachers perform was also a topical issue in this study and was thus investigated.

McGrath (2012) assertion is confirmed by Baughman, Brumm, and Mickelson (2012) in their study about competence-based learning, when they pronounce the five categories of competence this way:

- a) **Analytical and judgement** – which refers to an individual's potential to identify issues, problems and opportunities in the environment, in this case, a classroom, thereby collecting, matching and applying relevant information and tactics to take the appropriate action.
- b) **Communication** – which means clearly imparting ideas and information such that people understand and retain it for future use. This is evident in a classroom situation when teaching and learning is effectively taking place.
- c) **Initiative** - being able to pursue the set goals and acting beyond the call of duty.
- d) **Continuous learning** – having a willingness to identify new areas, working towards gaining new knowledge and skills and using the newly gained skills on the occupation.
- e) **Teamwork** – which is co-operatively and effectively participating as a team member to achieve the vision and mission of the institution. The researcher relates these competence categories to her study as their execution in a classroom situation bears effectiveness in a teacher. This study explored the existence of such competencies in teachers concerned and how they worked well in yielding the desired outcomes in the act of teaching and learning.

In their study about diagnostic competence of teachers, Klug, Bruder, Kelava, Spiel and Schmitz (2013) declare that educators are supposed to encounter different learning needs and to accommodate their teaching to multiple learning abilities, interests and drives of learners. How teachers acknowledge and accommodate learner diverse capabilities was an area of interest in this current study.

To summarise the definitions presented above, competence is therefore an individual's ability to perform tasks such that he/she attains the set targets. It is the consequence of combined learning experiences in which skills, knowledge and abilities work together to form learning that bears an evidence to the task for which they were assembled. Teacher competence involves the teachers' beliefs about themselves, their attitude, emotions and beliefs about how pupils learn. Given the definitions above, it clearly shows that a competent teacher is the one who is able to perform duties attached to his/her position in a proper and excellent manner. Competence in this study relates to the above mentioned competencies, thus, this helped the researcher to construct an interview guide in which such competencies were investigated.

2.2.2 The concept of change

Change is regarded as a complex process, as people undergoing it are required to embark on a new journey accompanied by the fear of the unknown. However, In his study about why teachers must engage in productive change, Fullan (1993) refers to change as a pervasive and persistent uphill journey which forces itself on societies, meanwhile reducing the confidence of the people concerned. Meanwhile, Van Tonder (2004), in a study about organisational change, defines change as a process that modifies the condition of an object at a given point in time, to a different condition at a later stage. Ndou (2009), in the study about the role of school management teams in curriculum change management, refers to change as an ongoing, organised, and coherent process affected by individuals which takes time to come to observable results. In short, change is a process that modifies an object from its original condition to a different form and character.

On the other hand, Fullan (2000) describes educational change/reform as the restructuring and re-culturing of schools challenged and natured by new policies in education. In an interesting view, the author asserts that educational reform refers to a process whereby public education is changed in order to make it more productive, with the aim of closing the gap between different races and different economic backgrounds.

One of the vital changes that took place in the South African education system is the change in policies. Thus, people's beliefs and attitudes, in this case, play a major role regarding how they respond to change. In the study about change, Fullan (1993) expressed an interesting view that substantial expectations are awaited from teachers, though they receive very little support from education authorities, parents and learners. With the democratisation of the South African education system came change with a package of new education laws and policies such as Outcomes Based Education(OBE), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), White Paper 6 (inclusive education), to mention a few.

The manipulation of children's rights by learners, teachers' failure to adopt and to fully implement some of the new policies such as the policy for leave measures prescribed in HRM (35 of 2008), the abolishment of corporal punishment prescribed in South Africans Schools Act (84 of 1996) (SASA) and the lack of parental involvement and coaching, in a way affected teacher competence. Absenteeism by teachers badly reflected on their competencies. On the other hand, disobedient learners who disrupt processes of teaching and learning, assisted in teachers' competencies being challenged. Such learners also saw teachers defying SASA 84 of 1996 by resorting to corporal punishment. However, Fullan (1993) further suggests that teachers who appreciate and embrace change and its comprehensive character, find the means of coping.

It is an interesting view that “teaching at its core, is a moral profession” (Fullan, 1993, p. 1). This means that teachers’ behaviour is ought to make a positive change in the lives of children through classroom practice. Fullan further advocates that it is essential for leaders to understand change and be guided by moral purpose. This proposes that school Principals and management teams be willing to change their mind-set with regards to changing the forces affecting education and be in a position to make positive differences in the lives of the teachers. This calls for Principals to be instructional leaders, leaders who direct teaching and learning, while at the same time also supporting and motivating teachers and learners such that schools become centres of excellence. This study investigated how change affected Principals and educators in schools and how that has impacted on their performance. How change has assisted teachers in enforcing positive change in the lives of learners and how that affected their competencies was also explored. The way in which Principals and school management teams helped teachers adapt to the radical changes in schools and in the education system as such, was also an area of interest in this study.

Fullan declares that change is built upon four interrelated capacities namely personal vision building, inquiry, mastery and collaboration. He advises that teachers need to build their personal vision where they take a stand for an anticipated future, engaging in continuous learning to gain new knowledge and skills (inquiry), deeply understanding how knowledge and skills fit together (mastery) and how they can be effectively transferred to learners, colleagues and parents (collaboration). Research has revealed that working jointly with colleagues in enforcing change, through mentoring and support, endures positive influence in a classroom situation. Due to the nature of their job, teachers are by virtue change agents and career-long learners, without which they would be demoralised and not be able to stimulate students to be continuous learners (Fullan, 1993, p. 4). This highlights the importance of teachers adapting to and advocating for change. How teachers embrace change, their willingness to go with change by acquiring new knowledge and skills on an ongoing process and how well they transfer such knowledge and skills to learners, was also investigated in this particular study.

So much is expected from schools, School Management Teams and teachers, with regards to school performance. Fullan (1993) attests that though change expectations in schools are huge, how schools are organised and resourced remain in the same condition. It is evident that schools, especially those that were previously disadvantaged, still operate with barely adequate resources. Jansen (1998) shares the same sentiments that political necessities disregarded the passable accounts of resources in schools and classrooms when the apartheid curriculum was transformed to Outcomes Based Education. “Over the past decade, there has been a general recognition that many in the teaching profession are working under considerable stress. This is perceived to be mainly a result of the pressure caused by the rapid rate of change and increased responsibility at school level” (Naidoo, Botha and Bischoff, 2013, p. 78). Mounting self-doubt, brought about by these pressures and changes, drove teachers to reassess the possibility of pursuing their profession. Though change in the South African education system was initiated 20 years ago, teachers in Black schools are still operating under the same poor conditions, whereas their performance is compared to those of their counterparts in former Model C schools that are fully resourced. This study therefore investigated the availability of resources and the impact it bears on how teachers perform. The causes of the massive exit of teachers in the recent years was also an area of interest in this study.

Smit (2001) concurs with Jansen (1998) that after 1994, the government of South Africa endorsed a multiplicity of policies in order to reconstruct and transfigure the legacy of apartheid, of which the OBE and Curriculum 2005 were part of. The successful implementation of policy on educational change largely depend on how teachers understand or feel about the proposed change. According to Jansen, OBE as a curriculum change, brought about changes that were not warmly welcomed by teachers. Jansen posited deficits that were displayed in the new curriculum. One of the shortcomings was that OBE had not considered the endowment of adequate resources in South African schools and classrooms. It did not consider the culture of teaching and learning which was already subtle. Administrative work brought by the OBE was too much, yet the redeployment of teachers reduced teachers in schools, thereby burdening them with huge workloads.

The generation of the Green and White papers and other Acts has not corresponded with detectable changes in schools. According to Smit (2001), the implementation of change in curriculum was informed by the lack of preparation of teacher support and development. “Policies will always be interpreted differently as policy recipients’ interests, beliefs, culture, histories and experience differ from those of the policy makers” (Smit, 2001, p. 68). OBE was coupled with a lot of confusing terminology and added administrative duties that increased the work load. Minimum trainings were carried out by facilitators who had no facilitation experience and had minimal knowledge of OBE themselves. Due to the afore-mentioned reasons, OBE was not positively welcomed by teachers. As much as change was necessary in the South African Education system, enough time should have been invested on teacher preparations through developmental programmes so that they cope with the massive responsibility brought to them by the new curriculum. Smith argues that as crucial role players at the micro level, teachers need to be part of policy making in its initial stages. That would allow them to be fully capacitated and prepared for the successful implementation of the proposed change. So these changes, including policy changes, curricular changes and the increased duty load that occurred in the midst of teaching profession, have in a way impacted on teachers’ competencies. This study investigated the teachers’ perceptions about how change in education contributed to the manner in which they perform.

In their study which focused on helping teachers develop competence, Peacock and Rawson (2001) concur with Makoelle (2014) study about the changing of teachers’ beliefs towards inclusion in South Africa when they suggest the maintenance of stability between the demand to implement change and the support given to teachers by education authorities, such that change is successfully implemented. According to Makoelle, the introduction of inclusive education demanded teachers to change their beliefs, attitudes and practices, which meant a huge responsibility on the part of the teachers and the loads of paperwork. The author further argues that teachers are experiencing low morale as they receive little support from the authorities. In her experience as a teacher, the researcher has seen the top down approach adopted by the Department of Education in enacting changes. This has a tendency of inducing resistance in teachers and teacher unions, which undoubtedly results in stressful

working conditions. This study also explored how teachers cope amidst challenges and chaos caused by the radical changes in education and, if they get any support and motivation from those in power. The teachers' perceptions about being involved in the initial stages of changes that affect them were also explored. How unions affect the way teachers behave in the work place was also an area of interest in this study.

However, in the study about the perceptions of educators on the state of education in South Africa, Matoti (2010) suggests that an individual person goes through five stages of change namely: being aware of the need to change, having a desire to participate, acquiring knowledge about how to change, having a capability to implement change and, rendering reinforcement to keep change. Despite all the stages through which an individual goes, resistance to change is inevitable. Matoti also emphasises that even if the recipients see the need for change and are willing to participate, there would be problems if they lack the knowledge on how to change and moreover, if there are no systems put in place to sustain such change.

Teacher workload has always induced problems between teachers and management teams. Mampane (2012) study on teacher turnover crisis harmonises with Fullan (1993) that one of the causal factors leading teachers to exit their profession is the stress associated with high workload that is attached to the administrative responsibilities captured in the new curriculum. Meanwhile, in the study about the challenge to change teachers' attitudes in implementing inclusive education in the mainstream public schools, Makoelle (2014) argues that change in a school situation is, among other factors, influenced by increased teacher responsibility, workload and politics that pose a serious threat to a full grasp of change. It is agreeable that teachers coping with change meet the desired level of competence than those who are not coping.

In her experience as a manager, the researcher has learnt that increased duty load, the introduction of new subjects, new administrative duties and increased paper work, are some of the issues that contribute to low morale in teachers. The researcher has seen teachers refusing to take some subjects because of administrative duties and

the complexity they fore-see in those particular subjects. This study explored how the allocation of duties, accompanied by the administrative duties of the new curriculum, affected the competencies of teachers.

2.3 Relevant studies

This section is going to provide an overview of teacher competencies from both the international and the local perspectives.

2.3.1 International Studies

A study by Nordenbo et al. (2008) focused on teacher competencies and pupils' achievement. The results of the study revealed that classroom climate is created when a teacher gives support to learners, not only on things relating to work in class, but also on those about life in general. By so doing, a teacher is able to motivate his/her learners to utilise their full potential. Though it seems very old, another study by Guskey (1984) assessed the influence of the positive change in instructional effectiveness on the characteristics of teachers. This study is still relevant at the present moment as it reveals that the teacher's understanding of the subject content, coupled with an acknowledgement of the learners' diverse academic needs and pastoral care, create warm classroom atmosphere that is academically inviting and nurturing to every learner. Teacher competence is affirmed in what teachers do in class and eventually, on learner achievement. Thus, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning by capitalising on the knowledge and understanding of subject matter, matched with pastoral care, remained an area of interest in this study.

Teacher competence in relation to learner performance is receiving tremendous attention from the media across the world. In a study about teacher quality and learner achievement, Darling-Hammond (2000) advocates that schools have an impact on the children's learning and that the large part of that impact is attributed to teachers. The study revealed that teacher capability is a strong causation of divergent pupils learning. Sanders and Rivers (as cited in Daring Hammond, 2000), point out that

students who are successively exposed to incompetent teachers in a row, are more likely to perform poorly than those who are exposed to highly competent teachers. The ability to transfer ideas and knowledge convincingly is the teacher's competence linked to high learner achievement. Darling-Hammond (2000) advocates that it is credible that teachers' knowledge of a particular topic, paired with their knowledge of relevant strategies employed to teach a particular genre of learners, provide the foundation for their competencies.

From the learners' side, Darling-Hammond identified some variables which impacted on teacher competence and these include poverty and second additional language as a language of teaching and learning. The author further points out that evidence has shown that it is highly likely that the poor the socio economic status of learners, the less the chances of teachers that are fully certificated. He further noted that there is a strong interface between the teacher's qualification in a subject to be taught and learner achievement. Qualification in subject specifics plays a very significant role in equipping the teacher with relevant competent skills thus, a higher probability of good learner achievement. Literature suggests that thorough pre-teacher training with productive professional development during serving period, have consequential outcomes on the teaching strategies that fuel the teachers' abilities to competently teach diverse learners. Moreover, a teacher who is well prepared is confident in his/her classroom practice and therefore, has a strong influence on learner achievement. In light of the above, qualifying to teach a subject is of paramount importance. This study investigated how a qualification in a specific subject affects teachers' performance and consequently, learner achievement.

Darling-Hammond (2000) also declares that high policy intervention by the governments force teachers to give more attention to procedures than learning. So, despite the qualifications possessed by the teachers, the time that they spend in contact with learners has gradually been decreasing due to paper work. Years of research have proven that maximum teacher-pupil subject contact has a positive influence on learner performance. Darling-Hammond suggests that less policy intervention might be supportive to learner achievement as it might give the teachers

more time to engage in teaching and learning. Teachers' perspectives on procedures and paperwork, at the expense of determined subject contact between the teacher and the learner, were investigated in this study. However, there is a growing tendency whereby teachers are being held accountable for the outcomes of learner performance, which is believed to be an authentic indication of what is happening in classrooms.

In a study on accountability systems in schools, Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) established that the basis for any school to accept accountability lies on individual teachers sharing the same values on issues like what constitutes good teaching practices, what is expected from learners, who is responsible for teaching and how are the teachers and learners charged with teaching and learning. The authors refer to the individual's acknowledgement of his/her responsibility as a teacher and what is expected from learners as internal accountability.

Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) study revealed that in some countries in the United States of America, systems of measuring teacher performance/competence, coupled with sanctions and rewards, have been implemented in schools. In those countries where accountability to performance system is being implemented, the system goes with the following conditions: test scores be publicised, while schools with lower performance receive remediation and be denied graduation. This is so in order to hold teachers accountable for learner performance. The authors highlight the necessity of every structure in school, from level one to management, in taking full responsibility in classroom practice, thus being held accountable for learner performance. This study investigated the extent to which Principals, SMT and teachers are responsible and accountable for the maintenance of quality classroom practices, hence, good learner achievement.

Accountability system directs teachers to focus on set targets of learner achievement, reflect on self, thus, taking full responsibility for learners' progress, embark on extra lessons and increased engagement in the in-service training. It has been noted that in some aforementioned countries, teachers' judgement of the effectiveness of the

accountability sessions, especially in the low performing schools, is crowded by the way they perceive the character of learners and communities in which they live. These schools often focus on working harder on the methods they have been using, consequently bearing little or no positive results. Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) further attest that the implementation of accountability to performance systems received mixed feelings as some teachers believed that governments are emphasising more accountability on the part of the schools and teachers, while less on the learners themselves, implying that schools and teachers are responsible for learner performance. In light of the above, it is evident that people who are in the system of education are to be held accountable for the results achieved. In the researcher's personal experience, she has witnessed schools being categorised as T60 (schools that obtained less than 60 % in their National Senior Certificate) being required to provide the district with turnaround strategies to improve learner performance. These schools receive extensive monitoring. Primary schools whose grades 3, 6 and 7 scored below 40% in Annual National Assessments on the other hand, have to draft curriculum delivery improvement plans and engage in compulsory common tests every quarter. These primary schools are also monitored by district officials. Lately, primary schools have to monitor and submit the performance and the progress of Progressed Learners (see 1.9.4) to the district every quarter. These are some of the indicators that schools are being held accountable for the learners' performance. So, accountability is an essential element in this study. The study investigated the teachers' perceptions on being held accountable for the performance of their learners. Views on how to teach and prepare learners such that they obtain good performance, not only in School-Based Assessment (SBA) but also in standardised assessments including ANA, were also investigated.

Elmore and Fuhrman (2001) advise on the necessity and the demand for teachers' professional development, "More countries' procedures to assist low performing schools, while well intended, are relatively weak to increase the instructional capacity of the schools" (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2001, p. 70). However, this suggests that schools ought to be capacitated in planning new teaching strategies geared towards the needs and demands of the specific school, particularly learners. This calls for the organisation of quality professional development programmes that would equip the

teachers with the new teaching materials required, the content and the rate at which diverse students can master that content, what strategies are required that would enable the underperforming learners to attain the ability of mastering complex skills and, how instructional time can be effectively used. According to these authors, research acclaimed that some schools have been slow to respond to the demands of teacher development that is required to meet the necessities of the performance based on accountability systems.

Professional teacher development came out as an essential item in this study. Teacher professional development is important for the enhancement of teacher competence. In the researcher's experience, she has seen teachers gaining relevant knowledge and skills on different subjects through in-school and out of school staff development programmes. For in-school professional development, the Principal, SMT and experienced teachers would share their expertise with teachers on certain subjects and topics, the aim being that of teacher development. Monitoring and support would take place to ensure implementation and effectiveness. By investing time in professional development, teachers get introduced to various competencies. This study investigated the impact of staff development, mentoring, monitoring and support on teacher competence.

Since accountability to performance is based on the premise that schools and teachers focus on performance of learners by paying attention to what they do in class, how they teach and what they expect from their learners, a demand is placed on the teachers to engage in internal accountability, coupled with ongoing support and development. Elmore and Fuhrman postulate that internal accountability refers to the extent to which the school and teachers are reliably committed to teaching and learning, the extent to which they make time for teaching and learning activities and doing all that is required to improve learning. However, there is little or no obvious strategies put forward to measure and develop the extent of internal accountability, as it is inborn in nature. The researcher has in fact learnt the importance of teacher self-reflection. A demand for schools and teachers to practice new things, in spite of their previous performance, is ostensible. This require teachers to continually seek new

teaching strategies, more knowledge and skills through self- learning and professional development.

However, in a study on assisting teachers to develop competence criteria, Peacock and Rawson (2001) agree with Elmore and Fuhrman when they proclaim that teachers acquire new competencies by being reflective, taking full participation in determining what practices make a good teacher and, being willing to work collaboratively with other teachers through support and mentoring. Peacock and Rawson further argued that research has shown that for new competencies to be effective, skills and competencies learned in teacher development outside the classroom situations need to be brought back to the classroom for implementation, monitoring and support. These authors also revealed that classroom support through mentoring requires both mentors and people given support to be committed to criteria of professional development identified. In the researcher's experience, it is evident that educators' teamwork and participation in continuous professional development display possible growth that is sustainable. Set standards of development need management, monitoring and support by Heads of Departments and Principals to ensure the desired display of competent skills. Self-learning, continuous professional development, reflective practice and teamwork seem to be important factors in teacher competence. How teachers utilised opportunities of professional development and in-service training, self-learning and reflective practise to their benefit, was an area of interest that was investigated in this current study.

In a study on teacher competencies and pupils' achievement in pre-school and school, Nordenbo et al. (2008) found that teachers need to possess relational competencies in relation to individual learners. This is whereby a teacher establishes psychological bond with his/her pupils. According to these authors, teachers must possess such competencies to lead the class and actively involve the learners. The utilisation of various teaching methods and consideration of contexts and pupil diversity is of paramount importance in the classroom practice. Nordenbo et al. (2008) further promulgate that the knowledge of subject content enhances teacher competence. It is apparent that the knowledge of subject content is a crucial factor in teacher

competence. In the present study, the researcher explored the impact of teachers' knowledge of subject content on their competencies. How teachers take care of their learners' affective aspects as they competently transfer knowledge and skills was also investigated.

In the study about becoming a reflective teacher, Larrivee (2000) suggests that teachers tie their teaching decisions to beliefs about teaching and learning processes, assumptions and expectations from learners. The author emphasises that teachers engage in critical self-reflection. By being critically reflective, teachers would be able to consciously consider moral and ethical implications and the effects of classroom practices on learners. Larrivee (2000) shares the view with Muijs et al. (2014) who, in their study on teacher effectiveness and professional learning, noted that professional learning and reflection are vital to educational effectiveness. These authors highlight teachers' behaviours as vital to educational effectiveness. Thus, teachers need to be encouraged to develop behaviours that would enhance their competencies, for instance, drawing up their action plans, prioritising their professional needs and reflecting on their practices. By so doing, teachers would know exactly how they should behave to effect positively in class. In the same way, the researcher shares the same sentiments that classroom practice determines learners' outcomes, which serves as one of teacher competence yardstick. The other view is that the level of the class is explained by what teachers do in class. It is therefore crucial that teachers' practices are given priority and be enhanced accordingly.

According to Muijs et al. (2014) teachers as lifelong learners ought to learn in self-regulatory learning (SRL). Self-regulatory learning means taking full responsibility of one's own learning. The authors mention SRL as consisting of three areas of psychological functioning which are cognition, metacognition and motivation and affect.

i) Cognition refers to the information –processing strategies that are applied to task performance.

ii) Metacognition refers to the strategies used to control and regulate cognition.

ii) Motivation and effect refer to motivational beliefs about oneself and the tasks.

(Muijs et al. 2014, p. 239).

According to Muijs et al. (2014), becoming a skilled professional requires a continued involvement in learning the appropriate set of knowledge and skills that are cognitive to that occupation. So, developing metacognitive awareness and taking control of one's learning through SRL are important components of promoting learning for both teachers and learners. This suggests the need for teachers to embark on SRL as they need to be always well-informed and be ahead of their learners. A room for continued growth need to be created in the light that teacher improvement cannot be solely focused on the acquisition of isolated competencies, but a group of factors.

What the researcher has noted from the literature discussed above is the emphasis that is put on teacher behaviours, self-evaluation, taking control of one's learning and teacher professional development as means of enhancing teacher competencies. Working collaboratively to achieve common goals as a group of staff is necessary if a school is to achieve good performance. The importance of monitoring and support given by the Principals, SMT and mentor teachers could not be stressed more.

In this current study, how team teaching and networking improve teacher competencies was investigated.

2.3.2 Local studies

Bischoff and Grobler (1998) studied the management of teacher competence and found that the Republic of South Africa has experienced tremendous decrease in the standards of teaching practices due to major political changes which distressed the country. According to Bischoff and Grobler, teachers became more involved in political outbursts like sit-ins, stay-aways and marches. Frequent absenteeism due to strikes and stay-aways dampened the culture of teaching and learning. This would affect teacher competence in a negative way. If the high standard of teaching and learning is to be reclaimed, the restoration of the culture of teaching and learning need to be the priority. These authors reveal that the competencies of teachers encompass:

- i) Educational foundation of teachers, meaning the didactic and educational expertise of teachers.

- ii) Teacher reflection, referring to the teacher's ability to revise, think critically about and evaluate his/her own practice.
- iii) Cooperative ability, meaning being able to work with others in order to achieve the common goal.
- iv) Effectiveness, meaning the teacher's ability to productively use the available resource and time in order to attain the vision and the mission of the school.
- v) Leadership ability, referring to leadership qualities such as personal mastery, ethical consideration, effective communication, empowerment and inviting professional culture.

After 20 years of democracy, we still find teachers struggling to teach certain subjects because they lack the didactic expertise of those subjects. We still find teachers struggling to reflect on their own practices. Teachers are still struggling to be supportive of each other. Using the available resources productively is still an issue. Therefore, the afore-mentioned were topical issues that needed to be investigated in this particular study.

In their study, Bischoff and Grobler (1998) grouped the above aspects into educative competence and collaborative competence. According to them, being educative competent is when one is more confident with his/her professional qualifications, perceive themselves as empowered with the latest didactic techniques and are therefore independent and capable of performing one's job with no self-doubt, while being collaborative competent is when colleagues are willing to share their expertise in order to empower each other. These authors discovered that women educators perceived themselves as less educative competent compared to their male counterparts, the reason amongst them being that they lacked confidence and had the fear of rejection arising from mind-set created during the past era of women discrimination. However, they viewed themselves as collaborative competent as mostly woman most find no problem in sharing their expertise with others compared to their male counterparts. Primary school teachers also perceive themselves as less educative competent, the reason being that they are not subject specialists like their secondary school colleagues, but they consider themselves as more collaborative

competent. Teachers in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) considered themselves as less educative competent compared to their colleagues in Gauteng, the reason being that most KZN schools are in impoverished rural areas that have no adequate resources, but they perceived themselves as collaborative competent as they are sometimes forced to work together because of minimum resources in their schools. The higher the teachers' qualification, the more educative competent they viewed themselves. Broad banding and the abolishment of salary increase according to qualifications demoralised teachers. So, there is very little extrinsically motivating teachers to attain more qualifications and hence, more knowledge.

What transpires is that gender, environment, educational status and psychological state (self-concept) of teachers, have a particular effect on their competencies. This sends the clear message that teachers' confidence in classroom practice is affected by a variety of factors ranging from gender to the qualifications they possess. Being confident in oneself and in what the teacher does in class secures good performance. In this current study, the researcher also looked deep into what teachers say positively or negatively affect their confidence. This was important in order to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' self-concept and how it affected their competence.

Years of teacher unpreparedness, non-involvement in policy changes and interference of politics in schools bear some serious consequences in the South African Education system. In his investigation into what is wrong in South African schools, Taylor (2008) found that the majority of the South African children are exposed to considerably poor education quality than their counterparts in much poorer neighbouring countries. The author pronounces that the majority of South African schools are having high tolerance of teachers who are disrespectful of the notional time. According to Taylor (2008), the information gathered during Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) study, revealed the high levels of absenteeism and late coming amongst teachers as contributory factors. Teacher absenteeism has proven to have a serious negative aftermath on teacher performance and consequently, on learner achievement. According to Taylor, this supported the evidence obtained from Pupil Progress Project (PPP), a school effectiveness study conducted as in 2003

where 90 primary schools in the Western Cape were randomly selected. In that study, it was discovered that Principals failed to effect tight time management in schools, amongst others, timely return after school break. The report also revealed that most of the South African schools exhaust only half of their teaching time. Another factor noted was that what the Department developed to improve curriculum coverage and assessment, had in actual fact caused distraction for teachers as they spent more time doing paper work and less time on teaching. The role of a Principal as an instructional leader who encourages a learning school and internal accountability in educators was a topical issue that was investigated in this study.

Taylor (2008) also revealed alarming evidence drawn from the Integrated Education Project (IEP) which was conducted in 1000 schools randomly sampled in 4 South African Provinces. The study revealed that after four years of comprehensive training on Maths, Literacy and Science, most teachers still scored below average. According to Taylor, underperforming schools require provincial and district intervention to effect improvement. However, for district intervention to be effective, schools are required to develop an internal accountability system (see in 1.9.7) so that they meet external accountability conditions set by the districts. Taylor outlined the findings that training on curriculum as provided by district officials was inadequate. Based on those findings, it was suggested that subject advisors need to undergo subject training themselves, in order for them to afford adequate support to the teachers. The author suggests that teachers, more importantly Principals, need to acknowledge the Education Laws Amendment Act that stipulates the main purpose of the schools as learning, so Principals need to cultivate the culture of teaching and learning. Principals need to ensure that planning for assessment is adequately and timeously done to ensure enough time for curriculum delivery and hence, curriculum coverage. They also should initiate teacher development in and out of school to ensure curriculum support to the teachers.

For instructional improvement to take place, Taylor advises that teachers take full responsibility and accountability for learner achievement. It has been discovered that the subject knowledge of teachers is not sufficient to meet the curriculum requirements

set for their learners. So, there is an urgent call for an intervention to improve the subject knowledge of teachers. The first step on the road to improved knowledge must be for teachers to develop a sense of agency about their own learning (Taylor, 2008, p. 24). This implies that intensive in-service training is required for the teachers. More emphasis is put on primary schools that reading be diligently executed and monitored. Learning from the literature above, this particular study investigated the influence that the revitalisation of the culture of teaching and learning in schools has on teacher competence. How the implementation of proper monitoring systems in terms of instructional time and teacher attendance improved teachers' competencies. Teacher professional development enhances teacher competence. In that view, how the Principal and the SMT as instructional leaders develop teachers was indeed a serious matter that was investigated in this study.

In the study on how schools can build learning organisations in difficult contexts, Moloi (2010) suggests that when schools are observed as learning organisations, there is a high probability that learners will do well. According to Moloi, a learning organisation is a place where people continuously maximise their capacity to produce desirable results and where they continually learn how to learn collaboratively. However, Moloi spells commitment and dialogue among teachers as the prerequisites for the creation of a learning organisation. The author also mentions personal mastery which include behaviours such as sincerity, sacrifice and patience, as one of the basic conditions for creating a learning organisation. Personal mastery, according to Govender (2012) is a teacher's instinctive capability to understand diverse school and classroom situations and be able to face difficulties enshrined in the teaching profession with confidence. The author further asserts that a teacher with personal mastery is considerate and reflective of his own practice. The researcher saw the observation of schools as learning organisation fitting in her study thus, she explored how teachers create learning organisations in the contexts in which their schools existed.

Learner performance is undoubtedly a benchmark for teacher competence. However, so many factors have an effect on learner performance, thereby affecting the competencies of the teachers. In the study on constraints to school effectiveness, Shepherd (2011) confirms numerous factors such as family and learners'

characteristic, parent education, parent employment, home socio-economic status (SES) and learners' determination as having a forceful impact on educational performance of learners. According to Shepherd, teachers teaching at schools with low- socio economic status (L-SES) are likely to maximise the amount of time allocated for teaching and learning due to the reason that their parents are less likely to help learners with homework because of their educational status. Children who reside with both parents have best school performance. According to Shepherd, in poor communities where people do not speak the language of instruction, chances that they supplement the quality of teaching and learning in their school are very slim. Although the gap on educational attainment is narrowing and the increases in convection of resources to previously disadvantaged schools is apparent, the inequalities in the system of education is still evident.

Learners who attend poor schools are still quite deprived in their capability to perform well in assessments. Teacher qualification is mentioned as significant to learner performance. According to Shepherd, some L-SES schools lack the enabling conditions such as effective leadership, which also poses a threat to teacher competence. Lack of effective leadership by Principals of schools, the socio economic statuses of learners, their parents' level of education and the learners' drive came out to be important factors that bear a kind of impact on how teachers demonstrate their competent skills in classrooms. In this current study, the researcher investigated how parental involvement influence teachers' competencies. Also investigated was the impact of Principal's leadership on the competencies of the teachers. Learners' drive to learning was also an arear of interest in this study.

However, Mampane (2012) highlights a number of factors that contribute to teacher's competence being negatively affected. The author mentions among other factors, the stress caused by the increased educator workload, coupled with the administrative responsibilities embedded in the new curriculum. The phased out National Curriculum Statement and current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) demand continuous capturing of learner marks, filing of learner portfolio, preparing of learners' social and family background and pastoral care on top of instructional duties.

Mampane asserts that the amount of time spent on lesson planning and other administrative duties incorporated in the curriculum, is not equal to the amount of time spent teaching in class.

According to Mampane, studies revealed that teachers are always absent from work because of psychological factors, fatigue and physical illness caused by being overworked. Loss of prestige, moral decay in young people and ill-disciplined learners are also the cause of the decline in the teaching fraternity, resulting in many wanting to quit the teaching profession. The author suggests that the prestige that the teachers enjoyed has deteriorated over time. Teachers were highly regarded as people who bring light and civilisation to the nation. Teachers were considered *crème de la crème* of the society (Mampane, 2012, p. 77). These years, all that has declined. That is confirmed by the fact that the probability of learners nowadays choosing teaching as their career of choice is very low. That alone is a demoralising factor for teachers. The decline in students going for teaching in the higher education has propelled the Department of Education to offer the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme in order to motivate grade 12 learners into the teaching profession. Findings on studies like the one on the causes of decline conducted by Mthiyane, Bhengu, and Bayeni (2014) concur with those on teacher turnover crisis conducted by Mampane (2012), that most teachers acquire the teaching profession not for the love of it, but as a fall back profession to avoid sitting at home without any employment prospects. Workload seemed an important factor that influenced teacher competence thus, it was investigated in this study. Loss of professionalism, coupled with the loss of teachers' prestige, are amongst the factors that affect teachers and the way they perform. Thus, such factors were also explored in this study.

Like Taylor (2008) and Shepherd (2011), Spaull (2013) confirms that South African children are performing below average. Spaull points out that the available evidence suggests that South African children are attaining crippled learning shortcomings early in their school years, which is the root cause of underperformance later in their school career, "Poor quality at primary school level and secondary school level in South Africa severely limit youth's capacity to exploit further training opportunities" (Spaull, 2013, p. 52). The author attests that research suggests that a huge fraction of South

African primary school teachers have below average content knowledge and competencies of the subjects they teach. In this regard, Spauld suggests that teachers need urgent help through minimum proficiency training in the subjects which they teach and be evaluated at the end of training. Spauld (2013) suggests that accountability be increased at all levels in the education system. This study investigated what the teachers say about their competencies in primary school. How teachers think proficiency training, coupled with assessment, can be of assistance in enhancing their career was an area of interest that was investigated.

In a study on teacher effectiveness, school effectiveness and school improvement, Muijs et al. (2014) found that classroom level predicts what teachers do in class. Muijs et.al suggest that teachers are to motivate students to engage in self-regulated learning. This suggests that teachers themselves as life-long learners, are inclined to learn in a self-regulated learning, “A number of shifts in thinking are required at all levels of the system to reduce current disappointment in professional development as a mechanism to improve teacher effectiveness in relation to realising outcomes of students” (Muijs et al., 2014, p. 249). In light of this, everyone who has any kind of influence in education, be it the district officials, Principals, HODs or senior teachers, need to ensure that the enabling conditions for professional development are in place. Thus, this study also investigated the teachers’ engagement in self-regulated learning as a means of professional growth and the extent to which staff development programmes were used as a means of improving teacher competence.

In a study about school leaders playing a crucial role of creating a learning organisation, Bhengu and Gounder (2011) pronounce the importance of engaging in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), with an aim of improving teaching practices and learner performance. According to the authors, PLC refers to the context in which teachers communicate routinely about the issues of teaching and learning, thereby sharing ways of employing improved teaching practices. Findings indicated that those teachers who engaged in PLCs improved their teaching practices and consequently, learner achievement. Thus, this literature implicates the importance of teachers engaging in various contexts of professional learning, for example, cluster

meetings by neighbouring schools who formed clusters so that they share their expertise, or engaging in workshops organised by support groups in social networks where they share ideas with the aim of improving their teaching practices. Thus, the aspect of PLC was also investigated.

Interestingly, Kheswa, Sandlana and Kwabutana (2014) concur with the notion that the professional development of teachers be prioritised. They further promulgate the re-training of teachers as enabling them to adapt to new models of teaching enforced by changes in education. According to Kheswa et al. (2014), the need to engage in developmental programmes that would help improve teacher competence, thereby stimulating a richer learning environment, is imperative. Kheswa et al. assert that professional development includes high quality and relevant teacher education programmes that promote competencies to cater for diverse learner needs. The authors assert that continuous professional development results in educators being intrinsically motivated with increased conflict tolerance, which contributes in the growth and development of teachers. Through professional development, teachers become better equipped with subject mastery, assessment skills and classroom management skills. The authors point out stress as one of the inhibitors of creative thinking, such that one fails to achieve the set goals, resulting in low productivity and incompetence. Therefore, professional development deepens the educator's knowledge that contribute to his/her competencies and the lack of it to incompetence. As one of this study's research questions stipulates, factors that bear any kind of influence on teacher competence formed area of interest in this study.

Mthiyane et al. (2014), in the study about school decline, point out at the negative impact exerted by unions in schools and education in general, as some teachers hide their incompetency behind their unions. This is a reality observable in every day school situations, where unions would interfere with the normal school routines, for example, class visits and other monitoring systems. According to the authors, data suggest that some teachers lack commitment and competence. One of the reasons for the lack of commitment is that some teachers enter the teaching fraternity as their last resort.

They also highlight learners' ill-behaviour as killing teacher morale that leads to incompetence. Since the abolishment of corporal punishment, teachers, more especially in Black schools, have little or no knowledge of how to administer alternatives to corporal punishment. That leave them frustrated in terms of controlling learners who are not cooperative in performing given tasks.

To conclude this part, it can be argued that the key issues that came out of the literature discussed above include the need for teachers to engage in Professional Learning Communities in order to discuss the matters pertaining to their duties, the strategies they need to improve their teaching, as well as ways to overcome their challenges. The element of professional development and the impact it bears on teacher competence also emerged as a crucial issue and this prompted investigation by the researcher.

2.4. Theories of Competence

King, Keohane and Verba (as cited in Remler and Van Ryzin, 2010) define a theory as a reasoned and precise speculation that answers a research question and a justification of why the suggested answer is correct. Below is a discussion on some of the theories relevant to this study.

2.4.1. Mastery learning theory

Bloom (1968) outlines mastery learning based on the premise that it is the duty of the teacher to find a variety of strategies that would allow pupils to acquire the subject or task in consideration. However, Bloom highlights mastery learning as having variables such as:

i) Aptitude for particular kind of learning

According to Bloom (1968) learners have diverse aptitudes for different subjects. Teachers should therefore consider the fact that some students can master subjects

or given tasks faster than others. This calls for the teachers to engage in more effective conditions of learning to cater for the diverse learners' aptitude.

ii) Quality of instruction

According to Bloom (1968), grouping and grading according to classes proves the misconception that a classroom situation is standard. Teaching/instruction should cater for individual needs in a classroom situation. The standard of instruction should thus be viewed according to its effectiveness on the individual learner, rather than a group of learners. Because of the conditions under which teachers are working, schools are unable to provide separate instruction according to the learner's needs. Thus, highly effective group instruction carried out in an allowing resourced environment is recommended.

iii) Ability to understand instruction

Bloom (1968) shares the view that a learner's ability to understand instruction is by his/her verbal ability and reading comprehension. So, mastering the language has an influence in mastering tasks in different subjects.

iv) Perseverance

According to Bloom (1968), perseverance in this case refers to the amount of time a learner is supposed to spend on a task, together with the willingness of the learner to do so. Learners receiving appropriate instructional resources are likely to reduce perseverance. This is a call for teachers to thoroughly prepare the lesson by identifying the kind of learners they have in class, thereby utilising the relevant resources to cater for the learners' diverse needs.

v) Time allowed for learning

Time allocated for each learning task might be enough for some learners but not enough for others. Each student should be allowed enough time to learn. The time

needed by each learner is likely to be affected by his/her aptitude. Planning of learning tasks should therefore consider the reality mentioned.

From this theory, the researcher has learnt that the quality of the teacher's instruction determines the learner's achievement. Learners are unique, therefore, instruction should be tailored such that it benefits all learners. In a normal classroom situation, teachers need to base their planning of assessment on the reality that learners' aptitudes are diverse hence, the validity and reliability of the assessment task should include all the cognitive levels.

2.4.2 Vygotsky Socio Cultural Theory

In the socio cultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) describes learning as a social process that originates in society and culture. Vygotsky believed that learning takes place at two levels, that is, through collaboration with others and then incorporated into individual mental structure. The second level of development according to Vygotsky (1978), is that cognitive development transpires as a person networks with his culture and society. Vygotsky attests that a teacher or an experienced peer provides the learner with the framework to support the learner with surfacing complex skills.

From this theory, the researcher has learnt that human development takes place through social and cultural interaction of the person concerned and the people around him. Thus in this study, how relationships with fellow colleagues influence teacher competence was investigated.

2.4.3 Programmes Theory

According to Nordenbo et al. (2008), Programmes theory is a model that puts forward the view that teacher competencies are apparent in the instruction taking place in the classroom and have an influence on pupils' learning and attainment. The model points out the direction of the effect, but indicates nothing about the extent of the effect. The model also displays that the co-action between the teacher competence and the

learner achievement takes place in a context. However, factors in consideration of the context are not specified. The model thus ignores the complicatedness of the real classroom situation, whereby every pupil in a classroom interact interchangeably and the fact that people socially involved in interaction have influence over each other.

In a school situation, this theory focuses on the interaction that occurs between the teacher and learners, but ignores some contextual and behavioural factors of both the teachers and the learners, which play a major role in teachers' exhibiting their competent knowledge and skills successfully or otherwise. How teachers interact with their students and how that impacted on their competence was this study's area of focus as well.

2.4.4 Revitalised Competence Model

William et al. (2009) assert that after the elections in 1994, educational changes have seen the implementation of an inclusive education in South Africa. Learners with barriers to learning were now admitted in the mainstream schools. This brought doubt and the loss of self confidence in teachers. They felt like they were not competent enough to teach learners with learning barriers efficiently. William et al. (2009) outline the model that was developed to revitalise the teachers' competencies. Most teachers lost confidence and felt like they were not efficient to teach learners with diverse challenges, as they were allowed in the mainstream classroom.

The model is a schematic model represented by a glass with spiralled ribbon inside. It indicates that teachers lack confidence, are dissatisfied, and feel incompetent because of the inclusivity in education and all other changes in education. At the bottom of the glass is the facilitation phase, bottom left and bottom right are two glasses indicating negative perceptions about inclusive education and the needs teachers have regarding the implementation of the inclusive education and other changes in this regard. As the ribbon spirals upwards, it indicates the intervention of the district

officials who, through their experience and expertise, initiate and steer the process of revitalising the teacher competence. The process of revitalising confidence involves restoration of confidence, rejuvenating and proficiency through professional development and re-inspiration. This phase is represented by the spiral ribbon around the glass. See the diagram below:

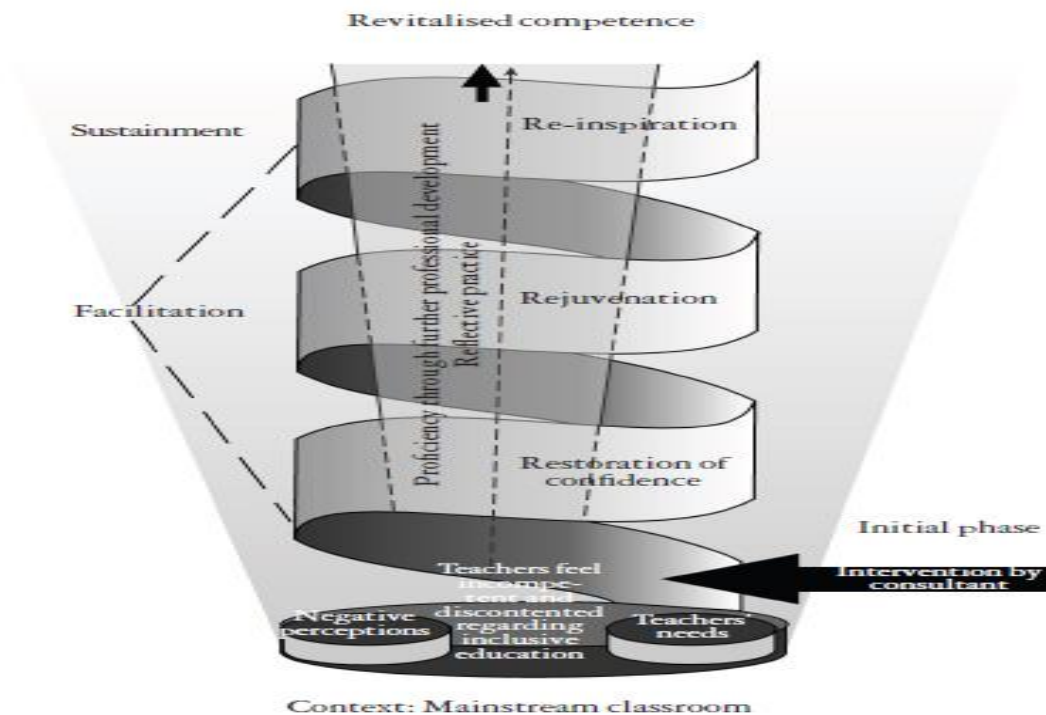


Fig 1. A diagram of a model to revitalized competence

The whole process is taking place within the scope of reflective practice. The ribbon represents teacher's perceptions, fears, attitudes and feelings. The pillar represents the need for knowledge and skills to function in the inclusive classroom. The restoration of the confidence represented by the bottom of the spiralled ribbon involve the acquisition of self-reliance that a teacher needs in order to gain positive attitude. The top part of the spiral ribbon indicates the process of inspiration, which the teacher would eventually gain. Proficiency is represented by the pillar that runs through the model. This would be attained through professional development. Teachers are in dire need of professional development in order to rejuvenate their teaching and regain the confidence that they have lost in the process of refurbishing the education system.

2.4.5 Self-efficacy model

According to Wood and Olivier (2008), the self-efficacy model was designed as an attempt to develop teachers to become more effective. Wood and Olivier (2008) assert that self-efficacy may be described as the teacher's confidence in his or her ability to successfully organise and carry-out his/her duties in a teaching-learning context. Self-efficacy is categorically related to effort, commitment and the time a teacher is willing to dedicate to teach in the classroom. Wood and Olivier (2008) posit that teachers who have a high sense of efficacy are open to change, willing to try new things and are persistent to difficult or challenging situations. These teachers, according to the said authors, exhibit the essential kind of knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours that are highly influential to learners.

The development of self-efficacy according to Wood and Olivier (2008), requires the facilitation of four processes that are interwoven, namely: the process of intrinsic growth, the development of an internal locus of control, positive interaction with the environment and reflective practice. During the development of self-efficacy, in the initial stage of intrinsic growth, the teacher is required to develop healthy self-concept. At this stage, the teacher begins to accept responsibility for his/ her actions and feels more in control. In the process, the barriers that the teacher encounters in the school and classroom environment would be seen as conquerable, while challenges become a learning curve and motivation. In the model, there is a strand representing the development of the internal locus of control. In a classroom situation, that is when a teacher gradually grows in developing self-confidence and in believing in him/herself. This overlaps with the strand representing intrinsic growth and interaction with the environment. The third strand representing the process of the interaction with the environment, is when the teacher is assisted to examine how he/she connects with learners, colleagues and parents, thus reflecting on these relationships and improve them in order to attain his/her teaching goals. This enables the teacher to gain more control over his/her classroom practices. As these three interrelated processes progress, the teacher progressively applies reflective practice that is, critically evaluating his /her own practices with an aim to improve.

For teachers to be role models who productively teach learners and achieve to maximise the best in terms of learners' good performance, they need to believe in themselves, in what they are doing in the class and to continually engage in reflective practice, thereby taking full charge and control over their classroom practices. In other words, developing self-efficacy opens a room for development and allows teachers to engage in reflective processes, thereby discovering and exercising their competent skills to their full potential.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study draws from the works of Bronfenbrenner Ecological Models of Human Development and Environmental theories, theories of Instructional leadership and theories of Collegiality. These are discussed in detail in this section.

2.5.1 Bronfenbrenner's Theories

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory and the Environmental theory highlight how the environment shapes a developing person, hence, the effects of teachers' own environment on their competencies.

a) The general ecological model

Bronfenbrenner (1994) talks of human psychological development as influenced by the environment in which he/she lives. The ecological model suggests that human development takes place through interaction between the evolving human being and the symbols, objects and persons in his/her environment. It is highly probable that an enabling environment leads to proper development, while poor environments lead to developmental impairment during childhood. The mental abilities of people and their academic achievement are developmental outcomes associated with stable environments.

Below are the five environments or contexts within which human development takes place Bronfenbrenner (1994):

i) Microsystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), microsystem refers to the interpersonal relations of a developing person with the people around him or her. For teachers to teach and learning to take place, learners and teachers interact and form relationships. The teacher in conjunction with the objects and symbols in the classroom situation nurture and develop the learner. Both teachers' and learners' behaviour are shaped by their immediate environment.

Naidoo et al. (2013) identify interpersonal demand as pressure exerted on teachers, as they function in a distinct role in the school situation. More often than not, teachers are unable to achieve the standards of learning as they would like to, due to a lot of paper work, heavy work load and the application of post provisioning norms (PPN) policies that leave them with massive duty load helping. According to Naidoo et al. (2013), lack of learner's motivation may lead to high failure rate that results in teachers being stressed and consequently, a decline in their work performance. Interpersonal demand amongst a number of things, includes conflicts amongst educators, caused by bad interpersonal relationships between teachers.

ii) Mesosystem

Mesosystem implies the connection of processes taking place in two or more environments containing the developing person. Parental involvement in his/her child learning plays a major role in the learning of a child. This assists teachers as that reinforces the continuity of learning in the form of homework, since learning is not a once-off thing. According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), a primary school learner from a classroom in which there is interaction between teachers and parents, performs better. Teachers form relationships with their learners and parents, thereby exhibiting their different kinds of competencies. This pays off in high learner performance, which is a yard stick of the teachers' competencies. However, teachers might experience difficulties in their families, be it marital problems or relationships. According Naidoo

et al. (2013), teachers who are going through difficulties in their families have difficulty in balancing their career and families and consequently, their performance suffers.

iii) Exo system

Bronfenbrenner (1994) refers to an exosystem as the connection of processes taking place between two or more environments, of which at least one does not contain the developing person, but whose events indirectly influence the developing person. The relationship between the learner and the neighbourhood peer has a lot of influence in his/her development. The neighbourhood indirectly affects teachers as well. Social-ills lead to the general decay of morality of the youth in the neighbourhood. For example, learners find themselves in the vicinity of youths who engage in substance abuse and other unacceptable behaviours in the neighbourhood, effecting negatively on them (learners) in so many ways. This often results in disobedient learners, demotivated learners or learners who do not have a conducive environment to continue with school work while out of school. According to Mampane (2012), the non-employment of security personnel in schools leave teachers vulnerable and exposed to the dangers of learners who bring weapons to schools and their ill-disciplined friends in the surrounding, coming and going as they please. That brings a lot of stress, leading to teachers being incompetent.

iv) Macro system

Macro system refer to the overlapping of microsystem, mesosystem, and exo systems' characteristics with reference to a particular culture or sub culture, belief systems, body of knowledge, customs, opportunity structures and life course. Culture and belief system in the school environment shape both the teacher' and learners' behaviour. It is a fact that everyone has a right to participate in the cultural or religious life of their choice Africa (1996). Some cultures and religion keep teachers as well learners away from class. Teacher's absence calls for an implementation of relief time table, which implicates more duty load on teachers who are present at school. According to Mampane (2012), lately, the principle to act *in loco parentis* does not apply in many instances, as learners enjoy many rights and power that enable them to determine the school agenda the way they see fit. That alone diminishes teachers' morale.

v) Chrono system

Bronfenbrenner (1994) defines Chrono system as the change or consistency over time, in the characteristics of the person and the environment in which that person lives. Changes that took place in the education system bring a certain kind of behaviour or development in a person in consideration, be it the teacher or the learner. According to Mosoge and Taunuyane (2012), the rise of teacher unionism that was influenced by resistance to apartheid regime, saw the shift of the teaching fraternity from professionals to workers who would opt to go on strike to let their voices heard by the employer. Naidoo et.al (2013) concur with this view when they argue that political changes and change in South African education system brought uncertainty and insecurity among educators. This has detrimental effects on the teachers' competence, as well as the learner performance. Mosoge and Taunuyane (2012), also cite the negative effects of the redeployment of teachers on their identity. This was the government attempt to equally distribute teachers throughout South Africa, with the aim of bringing education spending down. According Masoge and Taunuyane, teachers who are declared in excess display the feelings of resistance, loss of confidence, uncertainty and diminished morale. Teachers' behaviour determine what is done in class, which also determines the learners' performance.

b) Environment in the developmental perspective

According to Bronfenbrenner (1994), the environment in which a teacher's work plays a crucial role in encouraging or discouraging teachers to demonstrate their competent skills and knowledge maximally. In his environmental theory, Bronfenbrenner suggests four life courses through which human development takes place.

Life course Principle1- is when the individual's development is incorporated and shaped by the events taking place during the historical period through which the individual lives. In the context of this study, the experiences that teachers encounter in the field of teaching shape the person that they become over time. To make an example, the historical background of the majority of the teachers in our country leaves

them with no option but to be trapped in the traditional methods of teaching, those that were employed on them because that is what they know and that is what the environment in which they teach permits.

Life course Principle 2- is when the human development is influenced by the timing of the biological and social transition in connection to role expectations, opportunities and culturally designed age. In a school situation, to make an example, an experienced teacher is expected to behave in a more mature and responsible manner as he/she is regarded as a mentor who can show the way to the less experienced teachers. In this study, the role played by colleagues in mentoring each other for professional growth was investigated.

Life course Principle 3- Bronfenbrenner suggests that the reaction of one family member to the life event, affects other family members, since the lives of family members are interdependent. In a school situation, how each teacher reacts to events taking place in the school or in the system of education as a whole, affects others positively or negatively.

Life course Principle 4 - states that within the parameters and chances afforded by culture, socio economic status, an individual has got a choice to influence his development for better or for worse through his/her own action. After all is said and done, in the school situation, the decision lies with the individual whether to take action to improve one's teaching capability and effectiveness, or to do the opposite.

Bronfenbrenner's theories helped the researcher to look deep into the environment in which teachers' work, as one of the factors that affect teacher competence.

2.5.2 Theory of instructional leadership

Teachers are working under the leadership and the supervision of the school Principals. On that regard, closely viewing the theories of instructional leadership is necessary. As heads of schools and accounting officers, Principals have a duty to assist and influence teachers under their supervision, such that a learning and an effective organisation is created. In every sector of education, there is the accentuation of the role of the leadership for the improvement of quality teaching and learning. Blase and Blase (2000), in their study on instructional leadership, describe instructional leadership as the amalgamation of the tasks of absolute assistance to teachers as a developmental activity based on equality and growth. Meanwhile, Mthiyane et al. (2014) define instructional leadership as the Principal's influence that pays more attention on teaching and learning and teachers' behaviour in working with learners.

Blasé and Blasé (2000), suggest that for Principals to be effective, there is a compelling need for them to engage in dialogues with teachers, make enquiry and suggestions and give feedback, model and give praise, as well as promoting reflection and professional growth in teachers. In the study on the Principals' effectiveness in conversations about performance issues, Le Fevre and Robinson (2014) suggest that policies are challenging Principals to focus more on teachers and quality teaching such that more ambitious learner achievement targets is attained. The author assets that practices of effective leadership, include creating and conveying academic goals, supplying with necessary resources, participating and promoting teacher learning, promoting and evaluating quality teaching and learning and ensuring the school environment that is supportive and safe for both staff members and learners. However according to these authors Principal Principals are struggling to directly adress issues dealing with performance of teachers such that adresssing weak performance and resistance to change is still a challenge. In light of teacher competence my study sought to view Principals' actions in targeting the improved learner performance.

2.5.3 Theories of collegiality

Theories of collegiality emphasise that power and decision-making be shared among members of the institution. According to Bush (2006), collegial models assume that

organisations determine policy and make decisions through discussion processes that lead to consensus. Power is shared among the members of the institution who are assumed to share a set of common values and aims. Collegiality is suitable in institutions like schools. It can produce unity, as shared decisions are likely to be implemented effectively. The open decision-making method would lead to equality and fairness among educators. Models of collegiality have been implemented in educational management for quite some time and have proved to be more popular. However, according to Bush, criticism against the theories of collegiality have been that it may take longer to arrive at the decision as participants may have lengthy meetings before reaching a consensus.

Critics say that it is unrealistic in that it assumes that decisions can be reached through unanimity. The effectiveness of collegiality depends on the attitudes of the staff. Success is determined by the supportiveness of the staff and a failure by animosity and apathy. Collegiality adopts the principles of democracy. According to Bush (2006), while collegiality empowers staff and benefits the organisation in a democratic way, those in management are regarded as weak. Within this study, collegial theories might help us understand the context of democracy within which South African schools exist. The effectiveness of school managers to unleash the competencies of teachers to their maximum capacity rests with the leadership and management style she/he adopts.

2.6 Summary

In concluding this chapter, the literature has revealed that teacher competence includes the combination of content knowledge, didactic skills, intrinsic motivation, reflective practice and its demonstration in the classroom. The literature also highlights the importance and the necessity of teachers' professional development. Clearly, teachers as lifelong learners must engage in critical self-evaluation to create the room for continued growth and improvement. In so doing, they keep up to date with the ever changing world of information. It has been clearly indicated that teachers are

accountable for learner performance. While teachers are engaging in classroom practice, exhibiting their competencies, various factors affect their competencies. Environmental factors, highlighted in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theories, are among many other factors that have significant effect on teachers' competencies. Theories of instructional leadership and collegiality reveal the important role played by Principals in influencing the performance of teachers in a school situation.

However, in the literature reviewed, not much was said about teachers' own perspectives about their (in) competence. Therefore, the researcher explored and listened to what the teachers said about their own (in) competence. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology. According to Mc Millan and Schumacher (1984) a description of a study's methodology includes details on the design of the study, including the selection of the research site, the role of the researcher, initial entry for observation, the time and length of the study, the number of participants and how they were selected, as well as the data collection and analysis strategies. Therefore, this chapter outlines the research paradigm; research design, methodology, data generation procedures, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Merriam (1988), a paradigm is a free collection of logically held-together assumptions, ideas or intentions that orientate thinking and research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define it as the shared belief systems or a set of principles, a way of working and pursuing knowledge, an accord of what problems to investigate and how to investigate them in order to interpret the occurrences. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. According to Mji (2011), the interpretive enquiry aims at explaining how people acquaint themselves with the world, the way they interact together and the setting in which their interaction takes place. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that the interpretive paradigm is based on the ontology that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live. The principal focus of this study was to find out how teachers understand and interpret their (in) competencies in their world of teaching, therefore, the interpretive paradigm was suitable for the study. The paradigm utilised enabled the researcher to explore and listen to what teachers say about their competencies and the underlying factors influencing their behaviour, thereby gaining insights into what their perceptions are.

3.3 Research design

'Research design' is the plan according to which relevant data are collected (Creswell, 1994, p. 154. Wiersma (1995) declares the purpose of a research design as that of providing the most justifiable and reliable answers possible to the research questions. Yin (2009) defines a research design as an inspected expedition that examines the complicatedness of any existing reality within its real life context, especially when there are no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and context. The author further argues that a case study denotes an account of activity, event, or problem that contains a real situation.

3.3.1 The Case Study design

Fox (1969) asserts that case studies seek to achieve a profound and intricate understanding and description of an individual. Yin (2009) postulates that case studies depend on various sources of evidence and enable the researcher to gather information from different parties. The author further postulates that case studies are employed in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisation, social, political and related phenomena. Cohen et al. (2011) concur with the views of the previous authors when they state that the aim of a case study is to understand the participants' lived experiences, thoughts and feelings about the case explored. According to Merriam (1988), case studies lighten the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, in as much as it brings about the unearthing of new implications and lengthens the reader's knowledge or confirm what is known.

This study employed the case study design as it sought to understand experiences, views and concerns of individual participants. In this case, a case study design enabled the researcher to explore the teachers' competencies as a real life context that is largely debated. Thus, teachers' competencies were explored with the aim of gaining an in depth understanding of the teachers' perceptions, how they actually view their own competencies and the final outcomes of those competencies, what they perceive as influencing their competencies and how they think the competencies might be enhanced. The case study in this instance was appropriate. The reader is likely to

gain knowledge about what the teachers argued to have impacted on their competencies, what they thought could be done to enhance their competent skills in order to attain maximum and quality learner performance and also get to better understand why teachers behave in a particular manner. This enquiry adopted a multiple-case design as it took place in three schools. That enabled the researcher to explore within and between the cases, thereby developing an in depth understanding of the teachers' competencies.

3.3.2 The Qualitative approach

In order to answer the above mentioned objectives, the study adopted the qualitative research approach. According to De Vos (2002), qualitative research involves a multi-perspective approach exploiting diverse qualitative techniques and data collection methods, aiming to: designate, make sense of, interpret or reconstruct social interaction in order to expose the meanings that people involved in that interface, attach to it. Although it seems a very old study, Fox (1969) shares an interesting view that qualitative research methods do not rely on numerical data but are formulated to scientifically explain events, people and matters associated with them. In this study, the researcher comprehended issues from the teachers' point of view, being considerate of their feelings, taking the influences of contexts in their proximity into deliberation as Winstanely (2009), states that the qualitative approach seeks to bring about the understanding of issues from the participant's point of view. Understanding of participants' ideas, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and an analysis of their context was acquired through narratives of the participants' meanings regarding how they perceived their competencies. Meanwhile, Cresswell (2012) declares that qualitative research is best suited to explore the social phenomenon, for investigation is understood from the participant's point of view, in that social enquiry pays particular attention to the ways in which people confront and interpret events in the world in which they live. This related well with the teachers in the three different schools that were selected for the study.

3.3.3 Target population and sampling

According to Remler and Van Ryzin (2010), sampling is a process of selecting people (participants) for inclusion in a research. Purposive and convenient sampling methods

were used for this study. Three primary schools from one circuit of the Zululand district were selected. Merriam (1988) highlights two types of sampling as probability and non-probability sampling. According to Merriam, probability sampling occurs when one can predict for each element that it will be included in a sample, which allows the researcher to generalise the results of the study. Meanwhile, nonprobability sampling occurs when one cannot predict the chances each element has, of being included in a sample. According to Fox and Bayat (2007), non-probability sampling is habitually used in studies because it is appropriate and economical. Qualitative research often adopts the non-probability sampling because collected data are used to determine the series of occurrences, the inferences and relationships connecting to the occurrences.

The most suitable strategy in non-probability sampling is purposive sampling. Hoepfl (1997) argues that the qualitative research approach requires data that is rich in the description of people and places. Hence, for the determination of this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling methods to draw information from the participants. According Cohen et al. (2011), purposive sampling is when participants are selected on the basis of particular characteristics sought. According to Patton (2002) the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study.

In that way, the researcher thus purposively selected three schools on the basis of accessibility and the characteristics of the environment in which the schools exist. All three schools are in a rural area where unemployment rate is very high. The socio economic status of most families in these communities is low. The majority of learners is either raised by single parents who are unemployed or extended family who rely on social grants for survival. The schools have been granted statuses of no fee. Participants were purposively selected to enable the researcher to draw in information-rich participants who have dependable information and experience of classroom practice. Participants were post level one teachers, responsible for teaching and learning and all classroom practices, HODs responsible for subject teaching and the monitoring of classroom practices, as well as the Principals, because they are the ones who manage teaching and learning and are accounting officers. Thus, a purposive

selection of such participants was on the basis of their active involvement in the classroom where teachers' competencies are displayed. All in all three Principals, six Hods and nine Post Level One educators participated. The selection of schools and participants was based on the following criteria:

1. They belong to one circuit in the Zululand District.
2. They are Post level one teachers, Head of departments and Principals.
3. Their teaching experience is 3 years and more
4. They were willing to participate
5. Schools were easily accessible

3.4 Data generation methods

Data generation methods refer to accounts of instruments used to generate data (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Creswell (1994), the case study approach allows for a diversity of qualitative data generation methods and these include the in-depth individual interviews generating narrative data, participant and non-participant observation, focus group interviews and ethnographic fieldwork. Crowe et al. (2011) attest that triangulation refers to the employment of more than one data generation method to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Thus, three data generation methods were utilised in this study and these are observation, interview and document analysis.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews were the main data generation method of this study. According Cohen et al., (2000); Remler and Van Ryzin (2010) and Yin (2008), interviews in a qualitative research involve open ended questions that allow for the detailed responses from an interviewee. These may be unstructured or semi structured interviews. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1984) semi-structured interviews are open and purposive discussions where the researcher asks questions while the participants provide checks and responses. "Semi-structured interviews are guided by a list of questions to be explored, but neither exact wording nor the order of questions is determined ahead of time" (Merriam, 1988, p. 74). This study utilised semi-structured interviews

that allowed flexibility in exploring in-depth personal experiences of teachers and how these impacted on their competencies. Semi-structured interviews are also referred to as guided interviews as they allow the researcher to develop the area of inquiry during the interview.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher administered focus group interviews and individual interviews. Three schools within the same district were purposively selected. Within each school focus groups consisted of a group all HODs and a group of six Post Level 1 educators. Principals were interviewed individually According to Morgan and Spanish (1984), focus group interviewing is branded by the bringing together of several participants to discuss a topic of shared interests to themselves and to the researcher. Cohen et al. (2011) declare that focus groups are planned settings, bringing together a purposeful selected part of the population to discuss a particular given topic. For this particular study, the interviews took place in selected schools where the educators were divided into focus groups. Focus groups enabled the researcher to interview a number of people simultaneously, thereby saving time. Each focus group had a maximum number of 6 participants. Each session took one hour. Post level 1 teachers (PL-1) and Heads of department were interviewed separately to allow every participant to express their views and feelings freely. An interview schedule was used to guide the generation of information from the participants. The focus group interview schedule contained open-ended questions and prompts, which stirred discussion that enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth information. The use of open-ended questions encouraged two-way communication. Thus, the open-ended interviews allowed the researcher to obtain an inside view of the social phenomenon and also to explore other possibilities that emerged from the interaction.

3.4.2 Observations

Patton (2002) asserts that observations refer to field work accounts of activities, behaviours, actions, conversations, social relations and other aspects of observable human experience. However, Cohen et al. (2011) concur that observation means systematically looking and recording peoples' behaviour, events, settings, routine and many more observable actions. According to Fox (1969), some of the processes basic

to education like teaching, learning and motivation are worth observing in a school situation if such aspects are to be included in a study. Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2010) concur with Fox (1969) when they define observation as a data generation method in which the researcher does not participate in the interaction, but watches the phenomena, thus, interpreting beneath the surface of what he/she is watching. Thus, observation is the organised way of recording behavioural patterns of the participants without questioning them.

Briggs & Coleman, (2007) accept as true that observation permits the researcher to observe and study the life of a community as a whole, as well as the relationships between its members, activities and institutions. According to Briggs and Coleman (2007), observations are powerful and flexible tools that can be used in a study. “Observations is very useful research tool because it can give direct access and insights into complex social interactions and physical settings” (Briggs & Coleman, 2007, p. 174). According Rammala (2009), the observation method is a modest activity that does not require direct communication with the participants. Observation of punctuality can be conducted unobtrusively. The goal is to see teachers in their natural setting. Observing participation and co-operation of teachers in events like time management, classroom practice, management of order and discipline, engagement in lesson delivery provided the researcher with an opportunity to gather live data from the occurring real situation through video-recording. Teachers’ voices were heard in their actions.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis involves reading of written material that relates to some aspects of the study. In some instances, documents give information of incidents that occurred before the commencement of the study. The logic for reading the documents would be to find the implementation of the non-negotiables like teacher teaching on time (3t’s) proclaimed by the Department of Education in the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (DOE, 2008). Reading documents was a supplementary means of data collection. For the purpose of this study, documents that were analysed included teachers’ records of working hours, period register and timetables, departmental

minutes, teachers' work plans, school assessment plan, lesson plans and others. (Borg & Gall, 1989) affirm that documentary evidence is essential because it provides a rich discourse of facts interposed with opinions, making it useful in cross referencing of present findings. By going through the minutes of school internal departments, the researcher found out issues dealt with, concerning classroom engagement and learner performance. By going through teachers' work plans, the researcher discovered the teachers' cooperativeness in terms of class preparedness. Assessment plans and assessment records furnished the researcher with evidence of learner performance, as learner performance determines the level of competence that is displayed by teachers. Evidence portrayed in those documents represented the teachers' silent voices.

3.5 Data analysis

Interviews were tape recorded and were then transcribed. In qualitative data analysis, the researcher aims to gain new understanding of the situations and processes being investigated. In order to make meaning of the data generated, data analysis should unfold in stages. According to White (2002), qualitative research requires rational reasoning and it makes considerable use of inductive reasoning, organising the data into categories or themes and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories. Data were thus analysed in two phases:

- i) During the generation process.
Interviews were tape recorded. Notes regarding emerging issues were recorded. The researcher revised her ways on the basis of what the participants said in the interviews. Data were organised into categories.
- ii) After the generation process.
The interview data from audio tapes were transcribed. Transcribed data were given back to participants for member checking. The researcher sorted data and developed it into themes. Common things were synthesised and those

outstanding identified. Data were regrouped into categories that allowed for comparison between what different people said.

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Cohen (2011), ethics constitute of a set of preliminary contemplations that a researcher should address in planning a research. In that view, permission to conduct the study was requested and obtained from the Department of Education and the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethical Clearance Committee. Permission was also obtained from the school Principals. The purpose of the study was explained in writing. Informed consent was given and signed by the participants. Kvale (1996) posits that informed consent involves informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the research, as well as informing them about any possible risks and benefits that participation in that study may involve. Creswell (2012) also suggested that informed consent form is a statement that participants need to sign, which stipulates their rights as participants before they engage in a research. It was explained that the co-operation of the participants was voluntary. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. The researcher requested permission to voice record the participants in order to get accurate information. The researcher also ensured that privacy and confidentiality would be maintained all the time.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness concerns convincing the audience and the self that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to and worth taking account of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). The researcher thus employed triangulation (multi data collecting techniques) in order to obtain accurate information. Interviews were transcribed as spoken. To ensure accuracy, a voice recorder was used during the interviewing sessions. According to Patton (2002), the tape recorder is indispensable at increasing the accuracy of data collection. To ensure the accuracy of data generated, the researcher did member checking, that is to say, each participant was given a copy of

the transcriptions of the interview to check its validity. When presenting findings, the researcher quoted the exact words of the participants.

The study was piloted. Study piloting refers to miniature of some part of the actual study in which intended instruments are administered to subjects drawn from the sample but who are not participants, to provide a trial run of data collection approach (Fox, 1969, p. 66). Pilot study aims at investigating the feasibility of the project. According to Fox, pilot approach is essential as it provides field's experience and data to estimate reliability and practicality of the data generation instruments. The questionnaires initially drafted were based on the objectives of the study. The draft was given to Heads of Departments to check if the questions were understood by the participants.

3.8 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in three primary schools in one circuit of the Zululand district. Most schools are in communities where school work has no continuity at home due to reasons that most of households have poor socio-economic statuses and parents possess low levels of education. Most people in these communities were unemployed and some are either vendors or employed in shops in the nearby town. A large portion of learners in these schools were orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC's). Teachers in these schools were regarded as the main source of information as there were no media centres or libraries at learners' disposal. The said teachers were working in the environment where they received little or no support from parents as far as their children's school work was concerned. Within the selected schools, the researcher targeted the Principals, HODs and six Post Level 1 educators. Therefore, the study was confined to a small percentage of educators per school. One other restriction was that there was an exclusion of the perception of other stakeholders like parents.

3.9 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology undertaken to answer the research questions. In that view, the research design was discussed, the case study design, the interpretive paradigm, as well as the qualitative approach were discussed in detail. Essentially, the target population and sample characteristics were highlighted, and the rationale for choosing the participants. The data collection instruments were described and these included the interviews, document analysis and participant observation. Aspects of validity and reliability, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also highlighted. Lastly, data analysis strategies were also indicated. Given that, the next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the collected data. The three schools are given pseudonyms as Imfundoyisikhali that will be identified as 1, Sizonqoba identified as 2 and Vico primary schools identified as 3. The following is how I am going to identify the participants: The participant's name (pseudonyms) will be presented first, followed by abbreviation of a participant's designation (P for Principal, H for HoD and Ed for educator) and the number of the school. Thus from Imfundoyisikhali I will present Sizabakho-P1, Bhabha-H1, Mntambo-Ed1 and Zaza-Ed1. From Sizonqoba I will present Matlaba-P2, Bayeni-H2, Khumkani-H2, Thola-H2, Araba-Ed2, Khula-Ed2, Thetha-Ed2 and Mawoto-Ed2. From Vico I will present Mabuya-P3, Aphumelela-H3, Luvo-H3, Ncami-Ed3, Alungisa-Ed3 and Vuyiswa-Ed3.

The chapter starts by presenting the context of the schools from which the data were generated. This is followed by a thematic presentation and discussion of the data, based on the research questions. Lastly, the recommendations and conclusion will be provided. At this juncture, it is essential to reiterate that the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions about their (in) competence?
2. What are the factors affecting the teachers' competencies?
3. How can the teachers' competencies be enhanced?

4.2. Profiles of the schools from which the Participants were drawn

This section presents the profiles of the schools selected for the purpose of this study. It is important to begin the presentation by describing the contexts of the schools, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) emphasise the importance of the context in which the phenomenon is studied. The description of the schools provides the reader with a picture or the context from where data were generated.

Imfundoyisikhali Primary school.

This is a Section 21 school with no functions (as explained in chapter 1.8.9). It is situated in a rural area where many people are unemployed. It is a quintile 1 school (see chapter 1.8.10). The school has got an establishment of 12 teachers comprising the Principal, one HoD and 10 Post Level 1 educators and one Grade R practitioner. The school has got no administrative clerk, a cleaner and security guard. It has an enrolment of 444 learners, starting from Grade R to Grade 7. Most of the learners are raised by young and single mothers, while others by extended families or grandparents, as their biological parents are either deceased or living somewhere else. The school has eight classrooms which are overcrowded. It is the only primary school at a walking distance of the local community and is about 10 km from the local town.

Sizonqoba Primary School

This is also a Section 21 school with all functions (see chapter 1.8.9). It is also situated in a rural area with high unemployment rate. It is a quintile 1 school. The school has got an establishment of 28 teachers comprising the Principal, one Deputy Principal, three HoDs and 26 Post Level 1 educators, including three Grade R practitioners. The school has got one administrative clerk, one cleaner and one security guard. It has an enrolment of 1020 learners from Grade R to Grade 7. The majority of these learners are orphans and vulnerable (OVCs), raised by their grandparents or the extended families. Some are raised by young single mothers. The school has got a total number of 25 classrooms that are overcrowded. There are other neighbouring primary schools at a walking distance of the local community. The school is about 15 km from the local town.

¹ **Section 20 and Section 21 with no functions** is a status granted to the schools through South African Schools Act (SASA) in which the school funds would be under the administration of the Department. Schools in this regard are only allowed to procure their needs through the Department. **Section 21 with all functions** is a status granted to schools through SASA. This part of the ACT provides that the SGB be granted all functions of maintaining school facilities including school funds.

Vico Primary

This is a Section 21 school with no functions. It is also situated in a rural area with high unemployment rate. It is a quintile 1 school. The school has got an establishment of seven teachers comprising the Principal, no HoD as she got promoted and six Post Level 1 educators, including one Grade R practitioner. There is one security guard, no administrative clerk and no cleaner. The school has an enrolment of 144 learners starting from Grade R to Grade 7. Also, in this school, most of the learners are raised by young single mothers and some by the extended families or grandparents, as their biological parents are either deceased or they do not live with them. The school has seven classrooms with an average of 15 learners per class. There are neighbouring primary schools at a walking distance for the local community. The school is about 5 km from the local town.

4.3. Perspectives on teacher (in) competence

Under this theme, the teachers', HoDs' and Principals' perspectives about teachers' (in) competence are discussed. Firstly, the two sub-themes which are (in) competence of teachers and cooperation and commitment of teachers are presented and discussed. Secondly, the common and different perspectives about teachers (in) competence, as well as the main issues that emerged under this subtheme are discussed.

4.3.1. (In) competence.

The participants were asked about their perceptions of the teachers' competencies. The Principals and the HoDs put it clearly that the competencies of teachers ranged from bad to outstanding, while on the other hand, the teachers perceived their competencies as undoubtedly good. In this regard one Principal from Sizonqoba said:

Teachers are competent and if it is not, most of them are trying their best. One of the things which speaks volumes, is the enrolment. We keep on growing in the enrolment in each year. You know, we cannot underestimate parents. Although most of them are uneducated, they see quality and they make sure

that they bring their children to the school, because of the quality of education which is provided. Teachers are even tasked to participate in different committees' e.g. subject committees and many others. (Matlaba-P2)

Concurring with the above view, HODs reported that most of the teachers were working hard to teach learners under difficult conditions. Bayeni-H2 from Sizonqoba focus group had the following to say:

Teachers in my phase are working hard. I can say they display their competent skills well in classrooms. They are very committed. We all know teacher performance or competence is evident in learner achievement. Learners' results in this school are good. They improve each and every quarter.

Teachers viewed themselves as capable of teaching, such that they obtained maximum performance. In this regard one educator from Imfundo focus group responded as follows:

I enjoy every bit of teaching. I am so committed to teaching because I understand that teaching is building the nation. This is our future generation. And I can see that it was God's hand that was showing me that this is where you belong, the way I do things and the way I have changed the lives of many kids and the impact that I have made in this field for these 23 years. So I am so satisfied about how I work. (Zaza-Ed1)

Questioning the participants about what could be clearly indicating teachers' high level of competence in the classroom, some of them had the following to say:

Those basic things, that is to say, teachers are there in class on time teaching and assessing and nothing else. And let the extra mural activities be extra mural, meaning that, that will only be done after the contact time. Results that are good (Matlaba-P2).

Other than observing teachers during class visits, every Friday on assembly, learners are given an opportunity to show case what they are doing in class during the week for everyone to see. That is where we see the fruits of what is happening in class practically displayed by learners. (Sizabakho-P1).

As I monitor teachers' work, I observe that most teachers teach and ensure that they are on par with Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). There is evidence that they assess learners, control learners' work and give feedback. Should there be any lagging behind in ATPs, they set up their intervention programmes. (Bhabha-H1)

Although Principals and HoDs indicated that most of the teachers were doing their best to teach, a different perspective surfaced, that not so very productive teachers did exist in their schools. Mabuya-P3 had this to say:

I can't say they are bad nor they are good, but they are just average, because others are struggling towards "this new thing of CAPS", but they are still on the process of learning. For those in the intermediate phase, it is still difficult. It is better in the foundation phase.

When asked about the reasons why the intermediate and senior phase teachers were struggling, Mabuya-P3 responded by saying:

I don't know whether it is because CAPS started with Foundation phase teachers, but teachers in that phase are far better than their colleagues in other phases. And I also think some teachers struggle with the Language of teaching and learning (LOLT) which is English. They are not confident with their language proficiency, then they resort to code switching. Come assessments, questioning is in English.

On the same issue of teachers who were not doing well, Bhabha-H1 from Imfundoyisikhali responded as follows:

But there are those elements who are lazy, not that they cannot perform well, but who are lazy and deliberately so. Well... each and every one has got his/her personality and character that plays a major role in his/her day to day practices.

The above response was confirmed by Khumkani-H2 from Sizonqoba focus group who, on the same issue said:

Some teachers are disobedient. They don't want to carry out instructions from their supervisors, nor are they willing to oblige with some of the non-negotiables by the Department. For example, you struggle to get proper lesson planning

and other plans like assessment plan from such teachers. These teachers fail to pace their teaching according to Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and have no plans of improvement. They are very hard to deal with as they drag every little matter you disagreed upon, to their unions who without proper investigation take teachers' sides. Unions sometimes promotes absenteeism.

Despite those few individuals who were not performing well, the overall picture from Principals was that things were going well. HODs also confirmed that teachers were doing well. Teachers as well revealed that they were at their best performance. During data generation, the researcher looked at the assessment records in each school and the overall picture was that learner performance was good in SBAs and very poor in ANAs and other standardised tests like Science Olympiads and local common tests set by the district.

Given the argument that teachers were doing very well and the researcher's findings that ANAs and other assessments not set by teachers themselves were poorly performed, the researcher followed up as there was a contradiction. The reason for doing so was to find out if the results in ANAs matched the level of teacher competence as it was revealed in earlier responses. Principals and teachers indeed declared that ANAs and other common assessments were poorly performed in their schools, more so in the intermediate (IP) and senior phases (SP). This is what Principals had to say about ANAs.

ANA is still giving us a problem, not in my school only, but nationwide. Teachers in this school are doing their best to assist learners. To be honest, we have not yet reached the stage where we would proudly say ANA results are very good. But we are doing everything in our power to reach that stage. (Matlaba-P2)

Eish, it is frustrating, ANAs results are not as good as SBAs results, teachers are trying hard but there is little improvement. It is better in the foundation phase (Sizabakho-P1)

Mhmm, ANA is a disaster in this school that is all I can say. (Mabuya-P3)

HoDs also expressed their feeling of dismay about learner performance in ANAs and other common assessments. Bhabha-H1 responded as follows:

Mhmm! Well ANA is still not good in this school except for grades 1 to 3. But even in those grade performance in ANAs can be rated as satisfactory, to be honest, not as good. But I think the problem is deep. We all know that if the foundation is not properly laid, the house will eventually stumble and fall.

When probed further about what Bhabha-H1 meant, this is how he responded:

I think the focus should start at grade R itself if a good foundation is to be laid. I'm saying this because in case of our school, the grade R teachers we have, were previously teaching at a local crèche and when primary schools were compelled to have grade R, the five year olds and their teachers were moved to the nearby schools. It was totally ignored that these teachers were not trained for formal schooling. In our case, the highest qualification they have is standard 10. Mind you they are not classified as educators but as practitioners, with meagre salaries and no benefits at all.

Upon probing him to find out if these teachers did not receive any in-service training, the response was:

Yes, they do go to half a day workshops, which is not more than twice a year. Moreover, getting bursaries is an uphill for them. If they have to enrol to attain a professional teacher qualification, they have to take it out of their own pockets. Do you think an unhappy, less trained and less supported teacher can stand the demands of CAPS? I don't think so.

Teachers who were confident about their classroom performance in the initial stages of the interview were also not so confident regarding ANAs and common tests. One educator from Vico Primary focus group had this to say:

ANA is confusing us as teachers. Why ANA in the first place? It doesn't serve its purpose. It was supposed to be a diagnostic tool. What has our Department done about the problems diagnosed since ANA started? We keep on writing and attain the same result over and over again. It is not that most teachers in

the whole country are unable to teach. The problem is deeper than that. This ANA comes with a lot of marking, mark sheet, item analysis over and above SBAs that are considered for promotions. We only do what we can to be safe whether it benefit learners or not. I think we need to find some other ways to help improve the situation. (Aphumelela-ED-3)

On probing further about what they saw as the main cause of poor performance in ANAs and other common assessments, one Principal said:

Really, that is a tough one, but I think with all the changes in the curriculum, I am afraid teachers themselves are short of the subject content knowledge, as well as the relevant strategies for transferring that knowledge and skills to learners. (Matlaba-P2)

On the same issue Sizabakho-P1 said:

I think the FP has an advantage because the language of instruction is their mother tongue. Their results are better so far. The IP and the SP are not doing well. I think language is the barrier.

When asking them that if the language was different when SBAs were administered, as they were performed better than ANAs, and if not, how come the language seemed to be an issue only in ANAs, Sizabakho-P1 responded by saying:

Oh no, the language is just the same, whether it is SBAs or ANAs. Yes, language of teaching and learning (LOLT) is a barrier to learners, but I also think our teachers have not yet attained the skill of creating questions such that all cognitive levels or taxonomies are covered. I think the level of questioning for SBAs is not at the same level as that of ANAs. It goes without saying that when teachers set their own papers, they become lenient.

One HOD at Sizonqoba Primary had this to say:

I also think our learners spend little or no time revising at home. Or maybe ANAs are too difficult for our learners because I don't understand how come the whole of South Africa struggles with ANAs? In this school, teachers even have Saturday classes to equip learners. The improvement does not equate the

amount of time and energy teachers spent into preparations though.
(Khumkani-H2)

Thetha-Ed2 said:

To be well prepared for ANA demands amongst other things, that kids be given homework regularly to get practice. It shows a lack of motivation at home, when learners come back to school without writing their homework. So there is a combination of factors that contribute to the results of ANA not to be as good as we wish them to be.

To follow up on the issue of assessments, the researcher asked to find out what influence SBAs level of questioning bore on the ultimate performance in ANAs. Sizabakho-P1 said:

I ensure that we have a proper plan of assessments. HoDs and myself do pre and post moderations for every assessment. Assessment plans are done during the fourth quarter for the following year. The SMT ensure that assessment plans are adhered to. Should there be deviations, it is the educator's responsibility to notify his HoD. Like I said, I think managers and teachers still need development in questioning of high standards.

On the same issue, Mawoto-H2 from Imfundoyisikhali focus group responded by saying:

I think the problem may be that teachers are not using balanced level of questioning through-out the year when doing assessments. Learners just encounter such level of questioning only in ANA. And also, we cannot deny that there is that element of negativity around the whole ANA issue. To confirm that, teachers' protest against ANA administration this year (2015), led to its postponement.

The researcher further probed how come they did not pick up the short comings in questioning as they were supposed to moderate questions before teachers can administer any assessments? A response from Thola-H-2 was:

Yes, we do moderations, but I am afraid we as well need development on how to rate questions according to the required levels such that all cognitive skills are covered. Really, we need the how part of it. After being promoted as HODs

no programmes to develop us in things like how to moderate a paper or how to rate questions are done.

What emerged from the participants about ANAs and other standardised common assessments was that they were performed poorly in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. However, though not good, it was revealed that ANAs and common assessment were performed better in the Foundation Phase as their LOLT was their mother tongue. But, what also emerged was that the foundation was not properly laid in the initial grade, which has an influence on how learners perform later in their schooling years. What also emerged was that teachers have not yet attained how to set a balanced question paper, which covers all cognitive levels according to CAPS requirements. That surfaced as compromising good performance in ANAs and common tests, as learners are not used to the level of questioning they encounter.

Emerging from the responses about teacher competence were the strategies employed to keep the teachers competent, in spite of setbacks in ANAs. The researcher asked the teachers on how they were coping such that they maintained the high level of competence despite discouraging results in ANAs. What came out was that Principals adopted ways and strategies that supported and influenced teaching, such that good learner performance was attained. It was revealed that working cooperatively with SMT members was one of the strategies of developing competent teachers. Matlaba-P2 had the following to say:

Subject committees are important structures that need to be functional. I, together with the SMT encourage teachers to network within the school. That encourages teachers to engage more in specific subjects and more so, in the challenges they encounter. If one doesn't deliver good results, we ensure that we give him/her support. We are looking at the fact that your learners are our learners. In other words, we are all accountable.

Teachers Language proficiency, especially the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) in the IP and SP, was seen as needing more attention such that learners are

used to being addressed in English. So the researcher probed the Principals to find out what they did to assist their teachers in this regard. Mabuya-P3 responded:

During staff development, I encourage teachers to address each other in English as Language is also the barrier to good performance. I arrange workshops within the school about English Across the Curriculum (Peacock & Rawson) and network with other Principals. I also encourage teachers to network with other educators in the nearby schools. They've even formed a group where they used to come together to discuss these work schedules. I can see there is improvement.

HODs also revealed that teachers encountered a challenge to effectively teach learners with learning difficulties as they have little or no knowledge of dealing with such children. That reflected badly on teacher competence, as it affected the overall pass percentage and performance targets set by the school and the Department. What surfaced was the need for teachers' training on programmes to assist learners with learning difficulties. One HOD from Imfundoyisikhali focus group said:

There are those teachers who do not do well when they encounter learners with learning challenges. Learners have diverse needs. I think to assist learners with difficulties, more than extra classes may do the trick. Teachers also need to be trained on how to deal with Learners with Special Needs (Bhabha-H1).

The HODs revealed that working together help them to overcome challenges. (Bayeni-H2) of Sizonqoba had this to say:

In my phase, we work as a team to achieve our set targets. Every Tuesdays we have phase meetings in which we do staff developments. We discuss issues that affect our teaching practices and any other problems we encounter during teaching and learning.

An opinion from one teacher at Imfundoyisikhali focus group revealed a solution to ANA poor performance. Mntambo-Ed1 had this to say:

I think there are things that need to be addressed such that these ANAs are taken seriously, like, matric exams and be considered for progression e.g. let it be marked centrally. Why I say this is because, maybe at the back of our minds

as teachers', learners' and parents', it does say that after all, this is not for promotion purposes, then we don't pull all the stops to attain good results.

Main issues emerging on teacher (in) competence were that teachers were doing well, but some still struggled to master CAPS as a new curriculum. Although the overall picture painted was that teachers were doing well, learner performance in ANA remained poor. What emerged was that teachers lacked the skills of creating assessment tasks that cover all cognitive levels. This resulted in learners getting used to easy questions, such that when they come across ANAs balanced questions, it leads to poor performance. Theories of instructional leadership suggests that Principals assist and influence teachers such that effective learning take place. Although Principals said they were developing educators towards effective teaching and learning, to the contrary, no significant improvement in learner performance on ANAs was detected. Language proficiency in teachers posed a challenge that compelled them to eventually resort to code switching during lesson presentations. It also came out that teachers run short of skills that could assist in dealing with learners with learning barriers.

4.3.2 Cooperation and commitment

The researcher asked both the Principals and the HoDs about how cooperation and commitment from the teachers in their schools were ensured. Principals unanimously declared the importance of working cooperatively and including teachers in decision-making as encouraging competence in teachers. The Principal of Imfundoyisikhali had this to say:

In our school, we have always promoted excellence in teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities. That cannot be achieved by an individual teacher but by working jointly. We wanted to encourage teamwork. So teachers in this school are working together knowing that whatever they do reflects to the whole school. (Sizabakho-P1)

In the same regard, Matlaba-P2 responded by saying:

We don't underestimate how little quarrels among teachers exist. We make sure that each and every conflict brought before us is taken into consideration and is resolved amicably without taking sides. Unresolved conflicts can lead to not cooperating and therefore not committed to their work.

HoDs agreed with what Principals said. Bhabha-H1 responded:

I believe that when teachers work co-operatively, commitment and success are inevitable. I encourage networking and team teaching. Networking in cluster meetings also help. That is where we share problems we encounter in specific subjects and solve them.

The researcher asked the participants to share their secrets of keeping teachers cooperative and committed as they claim them to be. Bhabha had this to say:

We cannot run away from the fact that you sometimes find some teachers who are well vested with the subject, not willing to help others and sometimes even refusing to co operate with you as a supervisor at all. That depends on an individual's personality and character.

Still on the issue of co-operation and commitment, teachers also agreed that working as a team encourage unity that it values team effort. A teacher at Sizonqoba focus group responded by saying:

Together we stand, divided we fall. So we must work as a team. Most of the time we blame each other if learners are not doing well. We are supposed to work as a team and support each other. One should be in a position to assist a teacher doing the same subject as his/hers in another grade. Workshops by the department should also assist us. Some teachers end up in town when they are supposed to attend workshops. Though not a justifiable act, maybe it is because some subject advisors have got no answers to problems teachers encounter during teaching and learning other than content knowledge. We need ways to teach learners to score higher grades in specific subjects. (Araba-Ed2).

When I asked how they maintained co-operativeness among the staff, it was revealed that working cooperatively was easily threatened, one HoD from Sizonqoba responded as follows:

I would like to highlight the negative effect camps have in the institution. Camps spoil human relations that eventually interfere with school effectiveness. When two bulls are fighting, grass underneath is destroyed. Camps demoralise teachers. Teachers involved in such act just go to work with no enthusiasm. They don't co-operate and they are always ready to pick up fights with their colleagues and even with their supervisors. So every teacher in the institution is one way or another affected by such conflicts. Nobody is eager to go to work in a place where there is tension. As a result, you will find more teachers taking leave just to avoid the work place. (Khumkani-H2)

Probing further to find out what could lead to camps, one teacher from a focus group at Sizonqoba responded by saying :

Healthy communication among teachers is very important. It creates mutual respect. Bad attitude that lead to looking down upon each other causes serious damage. At times a teacher disrespects instructions from his/her HOD, simply because he/she looks down upon her. We are professionals, we are supposed to act like one . Sometimes we don't stand up to our profession. (Mawoto-Ed2)

Teachers from the focus group at Vico revealed that they sometimes observed the non-commitment and uncooperativeness from some of their colleagues:

Some teachers don't do their work properly. They absent themselves while they are in class. Some come late, and go early, they are not committed at all. Sometimes one can hear from a distance that a lesson is not delivered but something else. Such teachers. (Ncami-Ed3)

The researcher probed more to find out what the teacher meant by 'absenting' oneself while in class. One teacher responded by saying:

Othisha bangakumangaza (Teachers never cease to amaze you). Some teachers go to class on time but end up not doing what they are supposed to

do. Some engage themselves in social networks or update their files before submissions. Some just make empty noise and crack jokes such that if you go pass by you can think learning is taking place whereas it isn't. Even when attending workshops, some teachers won't even attend full sessions of planned workshops. They instead depart early and roam around in town. (Vuyiswa-Ed3)

Well, the researcher probed more to find out what was the teachers' opinions on proficiency tests at the end of each workshop. Mixed feelings were displayed in their responses:

I think tests can do. May be teachers will be putting their minds on what they are doing, knowing that there will be assessment at the end. Vuyiswa –Ed3

No tests should be administered. It's a big no for me. Alungisa-Ed3

From each school, the researcher viewed teachers' attendance registers and leave registers. The overall impression was that teacher attendance was good, except for one or two individuals who had a trend of taking leave. In each school during morning assembly, the researcher observed that each and every teacher was with his/her class preparing them to march to the assembly. Order and discipline was maintained. These observations confirmed cooperation and commitment in most teachers.

The main issues coming out from Principals was that involving teachers in decision making and working as a team boosted the teachers' confidence and they always supported each other. This is drawing from the theories of collegiality which advocate that members of the institutions be engaged in discussions in order to reach to consensus. It also emerged that resolving differences among teachers before they escalate to serious conflicts was crucial to maintain team spirit, as well as the dignity of the profession. Principals were to make teachers realise that they were agents of change who ought to bring light and change in the lives of the learners.

From the HoDs' perspectives, teachers' personalities and characters influenced how teachers committed and co-operated. What also came out was that certain personalities lead to camps and to disintegration of good human relation and eventually, the loss of teachers' dignity as they engage in squabbles. Where tension

among teachers exists, high rates of teacher absenteeism prevails and eventually, leading to poor learner performance.

From the teachers' perspectives, healthy communication between teachers was important to sustain good human relationships. Good human relationships and working cooperatively kept the teachers grounded and hence, the increased level of competence. Some teachers' unprofessional and unacceptable behaviours like insubordination arising from bad attitudes, non-commitment to work, conflicts, late coming and early departure, coming to school under influence of liquor to mention the few, contribute to the loss of teachers' dignity. Such behaviours also lead to incompetence.

The above interpretations indicate that from the participants' responses, when relations are good among teachers, they become eager to assist each other. They enjoy being at work, thereby minimising absenteeism. Teachers' confidence is boosted if they know they have the necessary support from their colleagues and their leadership .

4.3.3 Common and different perspectives

Common perspectives: Emerging from the participants was that good attitude and good human relations formed the foundation of working cooperatively and maximised the level of teacher competence. Nordenbo, Larsen, Tiftikci, Wendt, and Ostergaad (2008) suggest the possession of staff competence as one's ability to network with other staff members, which enhances one's competence. There is therefore the urgent need to improve performance in common assessment including ANAs and other standardised assessments set centrally. The need for intensive training on how to identify and then help learners with learning difficulties was revealed. It was also revealed that some teachers' unacceptable behaviours at a work place or outside the work place contribute to the loss of dignity for the teachers. According to Mampane (2012), the prestige that teachers enjoyed years ago has deteriorated over time, arguing that "Teachers were considered crème de la crème of the society" (Mampane, 2012, p. 5).

Different perspectives between teachers and Principals were that Principals saw engaging teachers in different committees as giving them the opportunities to unleash

their full potential, while at the same time, the teachers viewed it as time consuming, arguing that the time could be utilised in the classroom. Although the Principals sounded as supervising and monitoring teachers' work in class, the contradicting notion was that in their presence, teachers got away with engaging things that had nothing to do with teaching and learning whilst in the classroom. According to LeFevre and Robinson (2014), one of the findings of their study about interpersonal challenges of instructional leadership was that Principals struggled to directly address issues dealing with the under-performance of teachers. Whilst teachers saw themselves as entitled to leave as their democratic right, Principals perceived it as being abused by teachers for their personal gain.

Summing up perspectives on teacher (in) competence, it has been revealed that teachers were doing their best to teach, even sometimes under challenging conditions. This brings us to the discussion below, which highlights other factors affecting teacher competence.

4.4 Demotivating factors

Under this theme, the researcher is addressing the five factors that teachers pointed as affecting their teaching competence and these include change in the environment of the teacher; workload; learner commitment, discipline and safety in schools; parental involvement and resources.

4.4.1 Change in the environment

In this sub section, the implications of change in the environment where teachers worked are discussed. Below are the views and feelings that the researcher got from the Principals and teachers about the change in the environment where they were working.

When the researcher asked the teachers how they handled change in their environment, the Principals said that change was not a pleasant thing, arguing that they faced resistance from teachers as they were the implementers of the

Departmental policies at school. Principals unanimously agreed that although teachers resisted it, change is inevitable, it enables people to come out of their comfort zones and allows growth. One Principal from Vico said:

They have got no choice, sometimes you can see that they are trying to resist. But they have to adapt to the change. Change creates a room for growth. They are trying. (Mabuya-P3)

Principals claimed that teachers forgot that change affects not only the teachers, but everyone else in the system, including the Principals themselves. Matlaba-P2 had this to say:

Change affects teachers negatively, most particularly those who are aging, if you can look on the chart there, you can see we do have people from the late 50s and early 60s in this school. If the change does affect us negatively as the youth, it goes without saying that the elderly are grossly affected. Numerous curricular changes have occurred ever since I started teaching. It was an old Curriculum, then Curriculum 2005, RNCS, NCS, now it is CAPS. Do you know what it would be in the next 5 years?

In the same manner, one HoD from Imfundoyisikhali shared the same sentiments with the Principals. This was revealed in his responses when he said the following:

Teachers are frustrated by change, more especially because trainings on whatever change implemented are only for short periods and sometimes come after implementation. Some of the experienced educators are resigning. They find it very difficult to adapt to changes in our department that leaves them feeling like they know nothing, irrespective of the experience they have. (Bhabha-H1)

The above response was confirmed by one HoD at Sizonqoba who put it clearly that he wanted out. Khumkani-H2 had this to say:

I have only 3 years before I retire. I wish it was tomorrow. Teaching has turned out to be a very stressful career. All these changes that come and go really are frustrating older teachers. Nowadays, a teacher who has been in the system for years and regarded as a highly motivated and knowledgeable, is as good

as a newly appointed teacher because of the drastic changes that leave him as vulnerable and less confidence as possible.

On a different perspective, one HoD at Sizonqoba had the following to say:

Change is part of our existence. As HoDs, we need to do all in our power to support teachers. Although that fact is known, change does not come easy and it is not readily accepted. But we need to learn to accept it, no matter how hard.
(Bayeni-H2)

When asked how they handled change in the school environment, all teachers spoke of the confusion brought by the ever changing curriculum. Zaza-Ed1 from Imfundoyisikhali focus group responded by saying:

Changing curriculum like... something I don't know confuses us. When I have tried to master this kind of curriculum, another one comes in, then I will have to leave this one. You cannot do better and produce good products if, you yourself is confused and don't have confidence in what you are doing. On top of it all, there is this inclusive education that was thrown on our laps. Irrespective of learning difficulties learners are experiencing, results must be good. Ask me if we get any support from advisors about learners with learning difficulties.

Although change was strongly rejected, some teachers believed that change was necessary as it opened opportunities to grow. In support of this view, Araba from Sizonqoba and Alungisa from Vico shared the same sentiments. Araba-Ed2 had this to say:

Yes, change is affecting us a lot. But all in all, we have to be flexible. When we are called to bend to the East, I think we should be able to do so. I remember one colleague of mine who used to say jokingly, I am leaving the system, I am running away from amakapisi (CAPS). But I don't think we should be running away.

Alungisa-Ed3 responded by saying the following:

Change is a good thing. But change of policies now again sometimes affects us. For instance, the policy about learner progression which says that a learner must repeat a class only once in a phase. So no matter how poor the child's

progress is, she/he must progress to the next grade. That affects our teaching competencies because a teacher ends up having a handful of learners who did not master the work for previous class.

The Principals argued that teachers, more especially the elderly, were threatened by change such that they anticipated the day of retirement. Changes, including curricular changes instituted in a short space of time with no proper training, exerted pressure in the teachers and therefore instilled confusion, resistance and reduced their confidence.

On the same note, the HoDs noted that changing from something that one has done for a number of years, to something new, was not pleasant. It came out that change meant coming out of one's comfort zones and it is not pleasant. Resistance by teachers was due to the fear of the unknown, which drove many experienced teachers to resign. The teachers pointed at the lack of support from the district officials, for those teachers who are teaching learners with learning barriers. It also came out that although change is not pleasant, it opens the room for growth. As discussed in the literature review chapter, Bronfenbrenner (1999) noted that human development takes place in the environment. The person's behaviour is shaped by the environment in which the person lives. Thus, the environment in which the teachers' worked played a significant role in motivating or demotivating them to demonstrate their competent skills to the best of their ability.

The responses provided earlier revealed that change was not warmly welcome by most teachers, to such an extent that some of them opted to leave the system. However, it was also evident that it was not possible for teachers to avoid change. Teachers across all levels claimed that since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the Department of Education has enacted changes that induced resistance. Fullan (1993) affirms that teachers who appreciate and embrace change and its comprehensive character, find means of coping. It became apparent during the interviews that changes were enacted without proper prior consultation with the teachers who are the implementers of the change. Peacock and Rawson (2001) concur with Makoelle (2014) in their view that in order to effect change successfully, a balance between the pressure to implement change and the support given to the

teachers by the education authorities should be maintained, while at the same time, the teachers as the implementers of the change need to be actively involved in commanding and effecting the change. Matoti (2010) argues that even if the recipients see the need for change and are willing to participate, there would be problems if they lack the knowledge on how to change and there are no systems in place to sustain the change. In this regard, the researcher suggests that Principals of schools prepare their teachers by arranging for intensive training and engaging in discussions before any change is implemented. According to Bush (2006), the theories of collegiality suggest that shared decisions are likely to be implemented effectively.

Education White Paper 6 advocates for inclusive education in all the schools. What was common was that teachers voiced out the challenge of dealing with learners with learning barriers. This is confirmed by Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff, and Pettipher (2002) on their findings about inclusive education in South Africa, which limited training and the lack of support for teachers dealing with learners with special needs in mainstream schools, result in desperation and hopelessness in teachers concerned. However, Govender (2012) maintains that a teacher with high levels of competence is capable of understanding diversity in the classroom and is better able to face challenges encompassed in teaching and learning with confidence. Baughman, Brumm, and Mickelson (2012) agree with the previous author that a teacher should have the ability to identify issues, problems and opportunities in the classroom environment, for them to be able to collect, match and apply relevant information and tactics, thereby taking the appropriate action.

4.4.2 Work load

The interviews at different levels revealed work load as having influence over how teachers perform. The participants unanimously revealed that policies like that of Post Establishment and the constant change of the curriculum contribute to educators being overloaded. It is also known that teachers are employed according to the enrolment that guides the Post Provisional Norm (PPN) of the school. The researcher asked the teachers how duty load affected their competencies and one Mabuya-P3 said:

Out of seven grades including grade R, we are only 6. This is giving us no choice but to teach as many subjects as possible, even those that we are not comfortable teaching. This means that, while teachers are all busy in classes, there are two who are left unattended. Seriously, that is a disaster. Tell me, how do we ensure quality when working under such conditions?

In the same way, the Principal of Imfundoyisikhali, Sizabakho-P1, revealed that in their area, their school is the only primary school at a walking distance of their community. Because of that reason, they are forced to admit learners even when the floor space is not permitting. When the researcher asked how the duty load distribution in her school affected teachers she said:

Because of the lack of infrastructure in our school, overcrowding in classes is unavoidable. I can say it definitely interferes with how teachers work, which eventually manifest itself in the progress of the learners. The number of teachers in the school is not helping either, as we are only twelve. Individualised teaching and monitoring class activities is an uphill for teachers. Learners dodge class activities and become passive during teaching and learning just because as they know that a teacher cannot attend to them all.

When the researcher probed about the Department's reluctance to value specialisation in primary schools, Mabuya-P3 replied:

That's the reason why teachers in high school complain that learners from Primary school can't read and write. It's obvious that the foundation is not properly laid, because it is taken for granted that at primary school any teacher can teach any subject put forward. The fact is, not everyone is good at everything.

On the same issue, one HoD from Imfundoyisikhali, Bhabha –H1, had this to say:

A teacher is affected when he/she has to teach subjects he/she is not good at. One cannot be good at everything. But the situation compels in our school. Sometimes this evokes resistance from the teachers. Because of these conditional transfers, either because of redeployment or displacement, you find that a school is just given a teacher whose subject specialisation does not match the school's need.

When the researcher further asked HoDs on how they deal with resistant and difficult teachers, such that teaching and learning is not brought into disrepute, Khumkani-HoD-SIZ responded by saying:

Well, one has to refer back and bring to teachers' attention, the policies that outline the conduct expected from teachers, like SACE Code of Professional Ethics and Employment of Educators Act. Failing which we forward the matter to the Principal.

Stressing the point of subject specialisation as one of the factors that can ease work load, Araba-Ed2 had the following to say:

According to my view, even in primary schools, subject specialisation must be a prerequisite. So, I think it is not proper if the Department of Education ignores subject specialisation in Primary school. The new curriculum is very demanding. So, I wish subject specialisation could be encouraged even in primary schools. I think it is one of the reasons why teachers resign from the system. So I can say duty load has got a negative impact on our competence and as far as the performance of learners is concerned.

The frustrations endured by teachers due to less number of teachers appointed in a school were revealed. It was revealed that sometimes teachers are moved to other schools due to redeployment of teachers. One teacher from Vico focus group Ncami-Ed3 responded by saying:

It becomes a problem in this school because there is no way that we can teach subjects we are only good at. We take any subjects put forward. Subject specialisation is impossible. The number of teachers does not permit. Yoh!!! Marking is a burden. Because of the continuing decrease of learner enrolment in our school and that of the policy of Redeployment, some teachers from this school were moved to other schools. We are living in fear of being moved anytime. What about our families when we are moved far away from our families? So this is a problem.

However, situations and conditions are not the same for all the schools. One of the schools, Sizonqoba, has enough enrolment to secure enough teachers. Teachers

having freedom to choose subjects they are comfortable with. Matlaba-P2 had this to say:

In my school, each HOD is given an opportunity to give teachers work load as they work close to them. But I always say that, make it a point that I endorse it and to check if it is evenly distributed. And one of the freedoms I have given to educators is that before any load is given, educators must choose subjects they feel comfortable with.

One HoD from Sizonqoba focus group revealed that the Department sometimes imposes its pilot programmes that adds on the duty load. Thola-H2 had this to say:

I don't know whether to call it good luck or bad luck. Each time there is a new thing in the department, we are selected as a pilot. These pilot programmes consume a lot of time over and above the teaching and learning periods specified by CAPS document.

This was accorded by one teacher from Imfundoyisikhali focus group who felt that over and above, the huge duty load and paper work that come with the curriculum, the SMTs were imposing more duties that are not in their job description. Mntambo-Ed2 from Sizonqoba focus group responded by saying:

Some other practices are very moral and logically correct. But they inflict with the policy. Such that if you have to clean the school premises every one hour, every week, you end up forfeiting a fraction of your contact time and lag behind with your ATP. The policy does not give any provision for that. So by the time you have lost that hour, you are getting more behind with the targets that are set on the document.

The Principals argued that the administration of PPN left teachers with loads of work. To disregard the importance of employing teachers with subject specifics in primary schools by the Department, Principals compelled teachers to teach subjects they were not trained for. Overcrowding in the classes due to the lack of infrastructure contributed to teachers being unable to do individualised teaching to cater for the learners' diverse needs. To a certain extent, these factors lead to the incompetence in the teachers.

From the HoDs' perspectives, the Department ignored the curricular needs of a school when employing teachers or substitute teachers. Massive work load incorporated in

the new curriculum in the form of administrative duties and piloting programmes came out as factors interfering with contact time. From the teachers' side, they felt overloaded and that greatly interfered with them unleashing their full potentials. They were concerned about the reluctance of the Department of Education to provide all schools with support staff in order to ease the load on teachers, which also does not form part of their job description.

Overall, the main issue emerging out of the responses is that the reduced number of teachers due to PPN, contributed to the escalating teachers' work load. Non-specialisation in primary schools also compelled teachers to teach subjects that they have little knowledge about. This was viewed as promoting mediocrity. The view above is firmly established by (Nordenbo et al. 2008, p. 56) who talk of the importance of teachers possessing "Cognitive subject knowledge" which relates to the teacher's theoretical understanding of the subject taught and 'practical subject skills' that relate to the management of those skills as demanded by the subject. The teachers pointed at the demands of the new curriculum and their lack of sufficient content knowledge. This is confirmed by Spall (2013) in his/her findings about the quality of education in South Africa, that a huge fraction of South African primary school teachers have below average content knowledge and competencies of subjects they teach.

4.4.3 *Learner commitment, discipline and safety*

In this subsection the researcher discusses how the lack of discipline, lack of commitment and the lack of safety in the school environment affected the competencies of the teachers.

The Principals of the schools revealed a deterioration in learner discipline. When asked about how order, discipline and commitment of learners affect teachers' competencies, the respondents felt that schools are operating in an era where learners disregard authority. They all felt like learners are ill disciplined and do not respect teachers, more especially because they know there is nothing effective teachers can do to reprimand them. Sizabakho-P1 had this to say:

Overcrowding in classes is another factor that has got a negative impact on the way teachers perform. It becomes hard for the teacher to monitor classwork for everyone in class in a single day. Learners capitalise on that. It became easy for learners not to complete given tasks, they can't complete their homework and projects at home because they know it is not easy to monitor their workbooks at a go. They lose that sense of responsibility. They even become passive. When learners are passive in class, a lot is at stake. Come assessments, one discovers the true learners in class.

One HoD from Sizonqoba focus group concurred with the abovementioned view when he said:

An overcrowded class is a mood killer. When you get into that class, you try your best, but it is like you are drowning. It is hard to carry out teaching without being disrupted. Children use that opportunity to get away with mischief. So a teacher wastes time disciplining learners. Then a teacher is totally disturbed. Believe me, when going back to the lesson, it won't be like what he/she has initially planned to do. (Bayeni-H2)

Teachers were also concerned that overcrowding interfer with how they maintain classroom discipline. One teacher from Imfundoyisikhali focus group had this to say:

In class, kids are packed, so I can't perform properly in such condition. Even discipline becomes an issue. Another thing is that I cannot attend to each and every individual learner's needs if a class is packed. (Zaza-Ed1)

It was also revealed that some learners come to school late, while others are frequently absent from school. Learners are not willing to do their work. When given tasks or homework for that matter, they are not afraid to come back to school without any attempt of doing such homework. Principals also affirm that to encourage cooperation in learners, schools need assistance from parents. They pointed out that education is like a three legged pot as it demands teachers, learners and parents to work together. The following is how Principals responded to the question about how learner cooperation and discipline is facilitated, such that a conducive learning environment is created. Mabuya-P3 said:

Hey, that's the tough one. Kids of this time are a handful really. Children come late to school. Some are always absent on particular days like the 1st day of each month in which they go to town with their parents on the day of social grant pay. Teachers are adamant to use alternative ways to corporal punishment because they say they are not effective, they simply refer learners to the office for the Principal to deal with the matter.

Regarding the issue of discipline and learner cooperation, Bhabha-H1 had this to say:

Challenges and social ills in the community in which the school exists has a lot of influence on the way learners behave at school and in class in particular. We try to work closely with parents, although we are still facing a challenge in trying to involve parents. We also involve learners in youth development activities. You won't believe that at this tender age, there are learners in this school who drink liquor, we also have cases where young girls became pregnant. Really, you are teaching the child and his mind is totally not in what you are doing in class. It is somewhere else. And what do you expect?

In this regard, teachers view policies of the Department as in favour of learners and working against them. Aphumelela-Ed3 said:

Learners nowadays know about their rights, but seem to forget that rights go together with responsibilities. In most cases, one or two in a class are ill behaved. Believe me that spoils the whole class because other learners will be waiting to see how you are going to react to that situation. Sometimes out of frustration, a teacher resorts to corporal punishment which she/he knows quite well it has been abolished. Knowingly, acting against the law and putting one's career in jeopardy says how frustrated teachers are. We feel like everybody from the Department to the parents, is against us.

Following up on the issue of discipline and cooperation of learners, it came up as a concern that some learners are living in child headed homes, which therefore explains the lack of parental guidance and consequently, discipline issues. These learners find

it difficult to juggle between schoolwork and caring for their siblings, therefore, it is their school work that suffers. One HoD from Sizonqoba focus group said:

The social background from which most of our learners are coming from, is not a good one. Most learners are coming from this surrounding area of XXX and the majority of the people living there are non-employed. Some of our learners are living with extended families who care less about their well-being and some are coming from child headed families. What comes out is that we are teaching deeply pained and very numb learners who are difficult to teach. (Thola-H2)

With so much pain endured by children at their youngest age, one teacher from Sizonqoba focus group felt that teachers and other fellow learners were no more safe as most learners harbour a lot of pain, anger and frustration. Mawoto-Ed2 from Sizonqoba focus group had this to say:

People need to remember that teaching involves a lot of emotions. A teacher connects with his learners. Being exposed to so many social ills, some learners have become so ill disciplined and so bullying such that their misbehaviour disrupts teaching and learning. Teachers run short of ideas of handling such learners. We are not even safe. Other learners are not safe too.

One teacher felt that for discipline to be maintained, a sound teacher – pupil relationship needs to be maintained at all times. Mntambo-Ed1 from Imfundo focus group said :

In my view, the priority is that learners inside the classroom are first comfortable and have faith in the teacher as a leader and a parent to whom they can report anything.

Emerging from Principals was the fact that although teachers knew about alternative ways to corporal punishment, it seemed like they were not willing to implement them at all. So Principals found themselves dealing with issues of classroom management, as teachers reported every little case that could have been dealt with in class. The feeling was that teachers completely shifted issues of discipline to the Principals, who perceived overcrowding as one other factor that encouraged non cooperation of learners in classrooms.

The HoDs commended that ill-disciplined learners dampened the spirit and enthusiasm to teach. Teachers lose that zeal because of the conditions they endured in class. They also felt that learners' social background is having a lot of influence on the way the learners behave in class. Overcrowding in classrooms perpetuated ill behaviour.

Teachers felt that maintaining order and discipline has become a huge problem over the years. With new the policies and rights which seem to be in favour of the learners, teachers are left with not so many options in terms of disciplining pupils. Teachers knew about alternative ways to punishment, but are reluctant to use them as they prove to be ineffective. It emerged that teachers were no more feeling safe in the presence of their learners. Coming up from teachers was the fact that to maintain discipline and cooperation from learners, a relationship of trust between a learner and a teacher should be established. To confirm what the teachers said about learner cooperation and discipline from these three schools, the researcher observed that some learners came to school late and were walking like they did not even know where they were going. But in all the three schools, the rate of late coming was not high at all.

The view of trust between the learner and the teacher as increasing chances of success is confirmed by Masher (2012) who argues that a feeling of trust should exist between a learner and a teacher before a learner is able to achieve. According to Masher (2012), the success that is achieved by the learner serves as a measure of teachers' success. The author posits that teachers know that for learning to take place successfully, order and discipline must be maintained. Although teachers wish to accommodate order and discipline in their teaching range, with the corporal punishment being abolished, teachers continually lament that the alternatives to corporal punishment are ineffective. According to Mampane (2012), the deterioration of morality in the society has contributed to the increase in the type of learners who are generally disobedient and have no respect for authority. Mampane (2012) is of the view that the principle of *loco parentis* is no more feasible as the cornerstone of teacher- learner relationship, since learners, with all the powers and rights, can change

the school agenda to fit their own. This is one of the contributing factors that lead to many educators losing passion for the career and eventually leaving the profession.

4.4.4 Parental involvement and support

It is true that for learning to take place successfully, cooperation of learners and support by parents is very important. When talking to Principals, the researcher found out that there was still a lot that needed to be done to ensure the involvement of parents in the education of their children. When learner discipline, commitment and safety in school was discussed, it became obvious that the involvement of parents in their learners' school matters. When asked how the involvement of parents in their schools was, one Principal had this to say:

Poverty in our community has an indirect impact on teacher competence. We are in a poverty stricken community. Parents are struggling to provide the basic needs for their children. Some children come to school on empty stomachs. Luckily, our school is on nutrition programme. Most learners from poor families lack motivation from their parents because their parents worry about what they are going to put on the table each day. How a learner is doing at school is the least of his/her worries and that is left to be seen at the end of the year. (Sizabakho-P1)

Some HoDs felt that parents who were school drop outs themselves, were unable to motivate their kids. They mentioned that some homes lack the solid family structures as they consist of single parents who are themselves young:

I can say some, if not most parents, do not want to involve themselves in their childrens' school work. It is very much evident that learners just do their school work when they are in front of their teachers and that is it. At home, nobody bothers. Lack of parental involvement encourages bunking of classes. Learners pretend as if he/she is going to school and end up wherever she/he likes to be without his/her parents picking. (Bayeni-H2)

Bayeni's view was accorded by her colleague who said:

Working with a large percentage of learners whose parents are not co-operative diminishes working morale in teachers. Education is like a 3 legged pot as it demands a full participation of a teacher, a learner and a parent. So when a teachers finds themselves in such dire situation, where they have to pull all the stops by themselves, they feels pressurised and eventually become demotivated. (Khumkani-H2)

Teachers also expressed the frustration they experience when they discover that at home, there was no continuation of what was done at school. The response below illustrates the challenge teachers are facing each time they are trying to involve parents. Mtambo-Ed1 had this to say:

Parents are not supportive at all. They don't take value of education of their children. It is like a parent not send their children to school to learn but to get them out of sight. It seems like they are pushing the whole responsibility to the teachers. You give learners projects, and they don't do. You ask their parents to come and talk in order to help whenever the child has a challenge, they just do not come. Parents are shifting all responsibility to us alone. And it is so heavy.

Principals revealed that the parents' level of education is another factor that contributes to them not co-operating with their children's schools or teachers. It was revealed that most learners are raised by grand parents as their parents are either working very far or they are deceased.

One thing, I just found out was that of a video from the social media. A parent was complaining about the learner who brought school work to do at home. She was arguing that she (a parent) won't be allowed to give her child washing to do at school. So why must she allow her kid to do school work at home. What I am saying is that due to illiteracy, some parents still see no reason why school work should be done at home. So it was laughable when circulating in the social media, but that's a reality and the kind of resistance we encounter everyday from parents. (Matlala-P2)

Principals also claimed that due to a variety of reasons, some learners do not live with their biological parents, but with their grand parents who find it very difficult to go to school. One Principal said:

Parents don't even attend the meetings. Even if you ask them to come and check their children's work, only a few come to school. They even fail to sign their kid's progress report. I think it is because most of our learners are orphans, they live with their grandparents. Sometimes their mothers are these youths of today who just mind their own business and have no time for their kids.
(Mabuya-P3)

In agreement with what the Principal pointed out above, an HOD of Imfundoyisikhali said:

Parents' level of education has a lot of influence on how learners view learning. That indirectly affects the way teachers perform. It is true that in this time and age, learners need a solid support structure at home, someone who is able to assist with school work. But most of the time, it is the opposite in our case. Parents in a way contribute to high rate of absenteeism. It is very common where a parent forces a child to remain at home on a school day in order to baby sit or to go look for a lost goat or cow. All those things show that in our communities, it still exists that schooling a child is optional. So if parents are not motivating learners at home, do you think teachers are winning? (Bhabha-H1)

One teacher from a focus group at Sizonqoba had this to say:

Our school has set aside parents days in which parents come to school to engage with teachers about their kids' progress. The main problem during these parents' days is that they don't come to school. It is like they are afraid to discover their kids' performance. They simply ask neighbours to sign the register of parent attendance for them. It shows that some parents don't care about this whole thing. However, most of the kids do not stay with their biological parents. So there are so many factors influencing such parents' behaviour and it affects our work negatively. (Thetha-Ed2)

In agreement with the view expressed above, one teacher from Vico focus group mentioned the lack of cooperation by parents as fuelled by changes in the curriculum which he thinks parents are struggling to grasp. The teacher had the following to say:

I think parents encounter problems when trying to help learners with school work. The reason being the changes in the school curriculum. If we, teachers are struggling to grasp the new curriculum, how much more with parents? So I think parents are not clear enough how to give assistance. But then, even learners themselves, are not eager enough to do homework. They lack that sense of urgency. (Aphumelela-Ed3)

When probed if teachers in any way provide parents with programmes of what to do when assisting learners at home, Aphumelela-Ed3 said:

I cannot lie, there is too much paper work to do such that we end up not issuing programmes like programmes of assessment and homework timetables to parents.

Having heard about parents who are not keen to involve themselves in school matters, it was revealed that some learners on the other hand, try by all means to keep their parents away from school. The reason being that they do not want their parents to find out about their bad behaviours which include truancy. One Principal said:

Some learners do not want their parents to meet their educators for their selfish reasons. Others (learners) are seen to be coming to school, whereas they are not. They know that if their parents meet their teachers, everything will be in the open. So that impacts negatively on the performance of a teacher because the aim behind was a teacher- learner-parent relationship that we were trying to build, which motivates learners and strengthens the competencies of educators. (Matlaba-P2)

To follow up on the parents' cooperativeness, during a school visit, the researcher observed parents' attendance in the meeting that was convened for grade 7's parents. The attendance was very poor. Out of 68 parents, only ten attended. This showed non cooperativeness on the side of the parents. In this regard, Principals noted that parents themselves lacked motivation due to poverty, sickness and their level of education. Another issue was that of parents who regarded primary school education as less

important. Principals said that it was evident during parent meetings that very few parents would attend or would just send a high school sibling to stand in her/his place. That act according to the Principals, showed how some parents can look down upon primary school education, the foundation of the education of their children.

Emerging from HoDs was the fact that most learners were orphans so they lived with their grand parents or extended families. It emerged that some learners were born to teenage mothers who were school dropouts and who find it very difficult to involve themselves in the education of their kids. It also came out that parents' level of education is one of the reasons why parents are not involving themselves.

The teachers acknowledged the importance of parental involvement in the educational affairs of their children, but however indicated that parents seem not to realise this. Teachers also revealed that learners' failure to do homework, displayed non-cooperativeness, the non-involvement of parents and the lack of work ethics in children, all affect their competencies. It surfaced that the ever changing curriculum was contributing to parents not being able to help their kids with school work. It came also emerged that even when parents come to discuss the learners' progress with the teachers, they do not know what is expected of them. However, what came up was that teachers fail to provide parents with the full programme on how to assist their children at home.

This is confirmed by Masher (2012) who noted that parents become alienated when their children are criticised. On that note, Masher suggests that teachers put a clear programme of what parents are supposed to do when assisting their children with homework. Crippled family structures add to teachers' dilemma as they have to deal with learners who sometimes live on their own or with extended families. In his theory of Ecological development, Bronfenbrenner (1993) suggests that an enabling environment is highly likely to lead to the development of good mental ability and achievement. This is affirmed by Shepherd (2011) who argues that children who reside with both parents have the best school performance. It is with no doubt that the active involvement of parents in the education of their children is very crucial for both the teachers and the learners to perform better.

4.4.5 Resources

When the participants were asked how resources impacted on their competencies, some Principals mentioned the unsatisfactory working conditions that included the lack of adequate resources which was seen as having a negative effect on the competencies of the teachers. One Principal, complained that the Department has been dragging the process to grant section 21 with full functions to all schools, including hers. That act by the Department contributed to schools not being able to timeously procure the resources they need. The Principal of Imfundoyisikhali said:

I know that at this age and time, teachers are still working under extremely difficult situations and conditions. Yes, our schools get the government subsidy, but is it enough to cater for the inadequate resources in our schools? The answer is NO. Why? Because the Department is adamant to grant section 21 with full functions to all schools. After receiving the school allocation on paper, we do requisitions of resources needed by the school from the Department. And out of the blue you are told funds have been exhausted without even receiving what you requested. (Sizabakho-P1)

HoDs agreed that with the provision of Norms and Standards, basic learner-teacher support material was provided. However, a concern was raised that in Black schools, it was still a struggle to attain adequate resources to the same level as former Model C schools. Bhabha-H1 has this to say:

Provision and the availability of adequate resources boost the confidence of a teacher in classroom practice, but it is a luxury in our school. When we still lack resources like libraries, we will always lag behind in reading and the mastering of language and concepts of different subjects. (Bhabha-H1)

It came up that HoDs were concerned that parents did not protect the stationery supplied by schools to younger kids. One HoD had this to say:

The school provides learners with learning material, but the following day, they have got no pens, no exercise books and all. When asked where the school material is? The answer is my elder sister or brother, a sibling in high school took them. You see a parent did not protect the child or the parent simply said they will give you other books at school again. If we ask a parent to buy the

stationery as the child has already got his/her share, that takes ages before it is done. So that is really disturbing. (Thola-H2)

Teachers had a different perspective as far as the provision of adequate resources in their schools was concerned. Ncami-Ed3 said:

What I can say is that the school supplies stationery only at the beginning of the year. Other than that, a parent is responsible. Parents fail to provide and the Principal on the other hand, sometimes does not want to buy resources we need. They always hide by saying that the school has no funds. We end up struggling with learners with barely enough resources. (Ncami-Ed3)

The participants also mentioned the lagging behind of the Provincial Department to roll out resources e.g. personal computers which the Department promised to give to the teachers a long time ago, as also holding them back from developing to their full potential. The following is what the Principal from Sizonqoba said:

Nowadays, some schools, for example in Gauteng, teachers are using E-learning instead of carrying textbooks around. Now take a scenario where you are transferred from this Province to one of those schools, how are going to cope? The only suggestion here is that if you fail to equip yourself as a teacher, you will be forced to leave the system. The question is, when is this going to happen in our schools here? Here, we are still struggling to let each learner have his/her own textbook in our case. Ever changing curriculum is contributing to that fact. (Matlaba-P2)

The common perspective amongst Principals and HoDs was that having resources open a chance for both the teachers and the learners to grow. The following is what Thola-H2 said:

Different resources help teachers to gain more knowledge and make them competent. I support the notion that teachers are lifelong learners. So we learn along as we utilise some of the resources like computers and the internet. Though not so well equipped, the little we have in our school motivates teachers to work so hard and to do their best.

Teachers mentioned the insufficient human resources as directly interfering with their duties of teaching and learning. Mntambo-Ed1 had the following to say:

You know we are spending much time doing something that is not in our job description, such as supervising cleaning. Though minor, it interferes with our teaching time. You won't find teachers in former model c schools doing that, sadly we are compared to them in terms of the school performance.

From the Principals' responses, it was revealed that schools have not yet attained adequate resources. The Department's unwillingness to grant section 21 with full functions to all schools, hinders prioritisation and the procurement of the needed resources. Principals felt that for teachers' competencies to improve, resources that befit the class of the 21st century which is comparable to any modern class are needed. They revealed that resources like school libraries, projectors and others would put their schools at par with schools from the cities. It emerged that teachers needed to equip themselves with the suitable skills.

From the HoDs' responses, it was realised that although schools were funded by the government, funds were not enough to satisfy all the schools' needs. Parents were unable to supplement resources supplied by schools to their children. It is with no doubt that teachers' performance is grossly affected by the lack of adequate resources in class. Confirming what was said about parents not providing resources for their kids, the researcher observed at Imfundoyisikhali a number of learners moving door to door borrowing pens as it was time for examination. That alone confirmed how parents were non supportive of their children's education.

From teachers' perspectives, it emerged that sometimes Principals deliberately refused to buy the resources that the teachers needed. It also surfaced that teachers were sometimes forced to perform support staff duties, meaning that they sometimes have to be disturbed from their contact with learners. Failure by the Department to supply human resources resulted in teachers having to supervise duties that are not in their capacity. Shepherd (2011) confirms the above views by arguing that although the gap on educational attainment is narrowing and the increase in convection of resources to previously disadvantaged schools is apparent, inequalities in the

education system is still evident. Learners who attend poor schools are quite deprived in their capability to perform well in assessments. The author points out that teachers who work in schools with poor socio-economic status are likely to maximise their teaching time over and above the allocated teaching time because they are bound to help learners with homework as their parents are unable to do so and to go an extra mile to cover up for the non-availability of resources like laboratories and libraries.

4.4.6. Common and different perspectives

Under this section, the researcher discusses the commonalities and the differences as emerging from Principals' and educators' responses about the demotivating factors.

Common perspectives for all participants were that change was not easy and it threatens the teachers' confidence. The implementation of Departmental policies like that of rationalisation and redeployment of teachers and administrative duties embedded in the new curriculum has been identified as contributing to the teachers being overloaded. Mampane (2012) confirms that one of the causal factors for teachers to leave the profession is the stress associated with too much workloads. The other thing was that the teaching of subjects in which they were not trained also stressed the teachers. Social ills also contributed to the deterioration of discipline in schools. The poor work ethics of the learners were seen as a discipline problem that has an impact on the competencies of the teachers. The participants also noted that the banning of corporal punishment in schools seems to have left the teachers with very few options to deal with learner discipline. With the kind of learners in schools nowadays, teachers felt unsafe. All participants mentioned that the parents' level of education was one of the reasons why parents were not involving themselves in their children's education. Some parents did not value the education of their children such that they kept them away from school in order to performed some household chores. Young parents who were school dropouts and some parents who were not biological parents, also failed to motivate their kids concerning school work. The ever changing curriculum prevented parents from helping their children with homework. Resources in schools were not sufficient.

Different perspectives emerging were that teachers viewed change as confusing and as leading to loss of confidence, whilst Principals viewed change as a learning curve that enabled teachers to come out of their comfort zones by trying new things. Whilst teachers viewed themselves as doing everything in their power to teach subjects which they were not trained for, the Principals viewed them as not doing enough to gain knowledge in order to master those subjects. Teachers viewed pilot projects and extra duties as overburdening them with work whilst Principals viewed them as empowering. Whilst the Principals felt like the teachers have shifted managing class discipline to them, the teachers felt like administration of alternatives to corporal punishment was ineffective. Teachers felt that issuing homework timetables and programme of assessment added to loads of duties required of them, while the Principals perceived the provision of such programmes as enabling parents to better fit such programmes in their schedules in order to assist their children. Teachers felt like the Principals did not want to buy enough resources as needed, whilst the Principals complained that funds were not enough to provide for all the resources needed by teachers.

4.5 Enhancing their competence

The Principals' and teachers' suggestions on what they see as necessary to enhance the competencies of the teachers are discussed below. This section is discussed under two subheadings: the leadership role as the motivator and together finding the way.

4.5.1 Leadership role

Teachers in schools operate under the supervision of Principals and HoDs. As part of this study, the researcher saw it essential to interview the Principals, the middle managers (HoDs) and the teachers on how they think leadership can enhance the competencies of the teachers.

When the participants were asked what influence Principals and middle managers have on the competencies of the teachers, a common response was that teachers' behaviour is to some extent influenced and shaped by the leadership styles employed

by the school management. When probed on how they ensured that teachers acknowledge and implement the vision and mission of the schools, the Principals unanimously agreed on the view that involving teachers when drawing up school policies, including the vision and the mission of the school, encouraged ownership by teachers and clearly showed the direction the school takes. The point of leading by example was emphasised. One Principal Sizabakho-P1 had to say:

I know that at this age and time, teachers are working under extremely difficult situations and conditions. But hey, I have to maintain high standards of performance and professionalism. I personally need to set a good example for my teachers in terms of high performance, punctuality and professionalism.

The Principals mentioned that empowering teachers through power sharing by involving them in decision making and encouraging collaborative learning, helped to develop the teachers' unique skills and enabled them ownership of their work. One Principal Matlaba-P2 had this to say:

What I used to do is to observe each and every teacher, to see their capabilities, and I am better able to position them. It is not me alone who become in charge, I only suggest what we are supposed to have and welcome their suggestions as well, they are coming up with new things, new ideas. And sometimes if they feel that something needs to be changed, they advise and we simply do that together, assisting each other every step of the way.

When asking the HoDs how they ensure that the teachers under their supervision implement the vision and mission of their schools, they mentioned that sharing power with the teachers in their phases was the best strategy in ensuring that the teachers readily do their work. They were of the same view that in most cases, sharing power with the teachers motivates them to do even much better and even beyond the call of duty. They unanimously agreed that this act increases professional commitment in the teachers. HoD Thola-H2 had the following to say:

I acknowledge teachers' hard work. I even give them duties to be supervisors. In my phase, each grade has three or more sections. So each grade has a supervisor. I delegated some of my duties to them. This is an enabling opportunity to learn. A supervisor is chosen through hard work a teacher demonstrates.

Some teachers welcomed the challenge of being given an extra duty as opening the room for growth. One teacher Khula-Ed2 responded by saying:

In our phase, our HoD motivates us. Every year during our phase meetings, our HoD encourages us to choose the best teacher from each grade to do demonstration lesson. We do that quarterly. That leads to a selection of grade supervisors. So each grade selects its own supervisors. Well, well... that comes with an extra responsibility, but it makes us grow and make us even more competent and more confident in our work.

However, the Principals voiced out that not all the teachers take the added responsibility as a learning opportunity, but some of them rather perceive it as being over-burdened with work not meant for them. In this regard, Mabuya-P3 responded by saying:

You know, I remember that early in the 2000s, some teachers were granted the status of being senior teachers, we have one in our school. When in any day that teacher is given any management duty, hey it becomes a huge problem, as she flatly refuses to avail herself for that particular duty.

The Principal's view above was alluded by some teachers who felt like given a duty over and above the specific duties of a teacher as laid down in PAM (Professional Administrative Measures) document, surely interfered with their performance. Mntambo-Ed2 had the following to say:

But I don't know whether this is out of context...hey, sometimes the school management interferes with the policy which leads to educators being incompetent. Again, to me, teaching is about the kid and the implementation of the CAPS document, not extra duties like all other sorts of work given to us that is supposed to be carried out by the SMT or grounds man or cleaner for that matter.

When asking the Principals on how they kept teachers going despite all challenges encompassed in the teaching profession, they unanimously and openly acknowledged the work well done by the teachers, while at the same time they encouraged teachers to do even much better. Matlala-P2 had the following to say:

I think appreciating educators for work well done is very important. In our school, we have a plan which aims at awarding educators who have done well, in an annual speech and prize giving function. Believe me, everyone is striving to be the best.

In the same regard, the HoDs also agreed that appreciating teachers boost their morale. Bhabha-H1 responded by saying:

I think giving support before judging that teacher as a failure is important.

Although all Principals and HoDs expressed themselves as sharing power with their teachers and openly appreciating them to keep them motivated, some teachers were concerned about the lack of appreciation by their managers. On that note, one teacher from Imfundoyisikhali focus group had the following to say:

Maybe the SMT needs to know that always finding faults in someone is demotivating. We need to be acknowledged and be appreciated so that we get strength to push even harder and even go an extra mile to discover ourselves. We get less of that in this school. (Aphumelela-Ed3)

One teacher from Sizonqoba focus group said:

Sometimes it raises questions how the best teacher is selected. Sometimes we wonder what criteria have been used for selection. Anyway, it is done by the SMT. (Araba-Ed2)

What emerged from the Principals was the Principal's role in influencing the teachers' behaviour, with the Principals themselves arguing that involving them in decision making enables the teachers to see them as part of the team. From the HoDs, it was noted that giving more support to the teachers instead of judging them as failures, boost their' morale. What was common in all the participants was that appreciating teachers encouraged them to work even harder. In contradiction to what managers said was that some teachers felt that they were excluded in some important issues that concerned them.

It is true that school effectiveness has always been attributed to effective leadership. This view is supported by Taylor (2008) when he suggests that Principals as heads of

institutions need to cultivate the culture of teaching and learning. The author concurs with Bush (2006) who, in his theories of collegiality, emphasises that decision making and power be shared among members of the institution. This is also confirmed by Mthiyane et al. (2014) who suggest that Principals of schools should build systems that encourage leadership in others and that influences teaching, such that it results in increased learner achievement.

Blasé and Blasé (2000) agree with the previous author that findings on instructional leadership show that effective Principals engage in dialogues with teachers by making enquiry and suggestions, giving feedback, modelling and giving praise, as well as promoting reflection and professional growth in teachers. This, according to Mkhize (2012) encourages increased professional commitment, identification with school values and goals with the intention of maintaining organisational membership and involvement beyond personal interest.

The involvement of teachers is further emphasised by Scherman, Zimmerman, Howie, and Bosker (2014) who emphasise the importance of the involvement of teachers in policy making and standard setting that make them realise their importance in the school, thereby adopting and owning policies to be implemented. Le Fevre and Robinson (2014) also emphasise that policies are challenging Principals to focus more on teachers and quality teaching, such that more ambitious learner achievement targets are attained. Principals are to set and communicate academic goals, supply teachers with the necessary resources, participate and promote teacher learning, promote and evaluate quality teaching and learning and ensure a school environment that is supportive and safe for both the teachers and the learners. From this description, it is clear that leadership and management styles of the Principals play a crucial role in how teachers behave.

4.5.2 How teachers' competence can be enhanced

This sub-theme discusses the suggestions pertaining to what the Principals and teachers think can be done to improve the competencies of teachers. The Principals

mentioned that they believe that going back to the basics where they would do regular monitoring on teachers' work and focusing more on teachers and quality teaching would help improve the competencies of the teachers. They believe if teachers maximise their contact with learners by doing what the teacher is supposed to do, which is teaching, could restore the dignity of the teaching profession. Matlala-P2 had this to say:

To me, class visits with an aim of supporting a teacher in doing his/her work, is one good thing. Teachers in my school have shied away from the fact that to have a Principal in a class while teaching is unlawful, they no longer say that because they know that to have me whilst they are teaching is for support, it is to see things and topics that the teacher is not comfortable with and try to support. Challenges detected through class visits will inform things to consider when planning a staff development. I think a Principal must be hands on. What I also see is the need for educators to change so as to adapt to the situation of the ever changing world and our system of education.

The Principals also mentioned the attendance of teachers as point of concern. They complained of teachers who always put their needs first before the needs of the learners. They raised concern about unions who act like it is right to abandon classes as they regularly hold meetings during school hours. Principal Sizabakho-P1 responded by saying:

In my experience, I have seen absenteeism of both teachers and learners as disturbing and impacting negatively on the learning of children and competence of the said teachers. If teachers could stop abusing their leave of absence and spend more time with learners teaching. Unions have a contributing factor on the absence of teachers. Teachers that are office bearers spend more time on union activities. I think unions have been given more power at learners' expense. If there was a way, their power will be somehow reduced.

To emphasise on the point of unions taking teachers away from the class, one Principal mentioned an instance where parents were compelled to chase a teacher away because the teacher was always absent. When asked what they think could be done to assist teachers to enhance their competencies, one Principal had this to say:

In our staff developments, we looking at the ways and means to support the teachers in their day to day engagement with learners. When drafting Staff Development Plan, we say to educators, we want to see things that they are not comfortable with inside the class during teaching and learning. (Matlaba-P3)

Looking at how they can enhance their competencies, Bhabha-H1 had this to say:

I encourage teachers to analyse their results in order to put improvement plans into place. If no improvement, it is advisable to sit with him/her to find out where the problem is. What we should avoid as teachers is to lament, saying that learners do not want to learn because it does not help anyone. If learners have unsatisfactorily results, let the teacher re-assess and network with other teachers of the same subject. Let him consider team teaching. Communicating with other educators about problems we encounter in specific subjects may also help. Change in education compels us to learn even more. Without learning continually, we are bound to lose out.

The HoDs also suggested using social networks as one other way of developing oneself by engaging on matters that can help improve one's standard of work. They mentioned the importance of engaging in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) using social media. Khumkani-H2 said:

I think teachers should seek information as much as they can. Nowadays, even cell phones have internet, and a lot of web sites relevant to our teaching profession. I think teachers need to enrich themselves regularly. If teachers could stop looking down upon themselves. If teachers could love their career and stop doing things that harm their dignity, resulting in teachers losing their prestige.

One Principal was hesitant if teachers, with all the backing of the unions, see the need of being assisted. Mabuya-P3's response was:

I can't say I can assist them. But I have to. Teachers today always tell you my union say this, my union say that. Everything is politicised.

When probed on whether developing teachers was part of the Principal's job description, the response was:

But they must be willing to be assisted, because the only problem is that you can do everything to assist them, but if they are not willing you cannot assist them. Some teachers have got a very bad attitude. But I make sure that I monitor their work regularly. If anyone has got a problem, then I intervene to help or involve specialists from the district to assist.

On the question of how teachers think their competencies could be improved, Zaza-Ed1 had this to say:

For me, self-development starts from within. You need to know yourself first, your weaknesses and your strengths. Then where you are weak, you try to find help, there is a plenty of help even within the institution. Before going out start within the institution. It is not a shame to say I don't know. It takes guts to say I don't know, I don't understand, that allows you and it gives an opportunity to learn. So you need to be down, don't look at yourself like you are better off. Nobody knows everything. So you need to go to anybody, even the grade R teacher you can gain a lot. I look for information everywhere. That is how I develop myself

Mawoto-Ed2 had the following to say:

We should refrain from looking down upon ourselves. We should refrain from preaching bad things about our profession publicly saying we are getting a meagre salary, we are like this, and we are like that. Any way who doesn't? Which government employee is paid enough? That is looking down upon our profession. We need to hold our heads high despite the challenges we face in our career.

Ncami-Ed3 said:

If we can get more teachers, teaching will improve because we will have reasonable load, marking will improve, and even attitude and enthusiasm will improve. Well preparedness can't be stressed more.

Emerging from the Principals was the urgent need to go back to the basics where the Principals are hands on in monitoring teachers' work, such that challenges

encountered by teachers are attended to, with immediate effect. Staff developments by Principals or specialist emerged as crucial. To gain more knowledge on subject specifics, the Principals should ensure that professional developments and in-service training are organised for teachers. It surfaced as a concern that some teachers were not willing to learn, therefore, were hard to develop. This is said to emanate from the bad attitude and arrogance displayed by some teachers. A suggestion to reduce the power possessed by the unions came up. According to Le Fevre and Robinson (2014), policies are challenging Principals to focus more on teachers and quality teaching such that more ambitious learner achievement targets are attained. The authors continue to say that practices of effective leadership include setting and communicating academic goals, supplying the necessary resources, participating and promoting teacher learning, as well as promoting and evaluating quality teaching and learning.

Emerging from the HoDs was the fact that teachers should stay informed at all times by networking within the school, outside the school or through social media. Teachers need to upgrade themselves as information continues to evolve, in as much as there is the need for the teachers to engage themselves in PLCs. Self-reflection came up as an important aspect of learning and which teachers must embark on. Teachers needed plans in place that would guide and inform their practices in the classroom. Monitoring of teachers' and learners' work emerged as a very crucial management duty, if effective teaching and learning was to be maintained at school. They also mentioned the importance of motivation by supervisors as instilling enthusiasm.

Coming from teachers was the fact that they should be able to reflect on oneself to deduce one's strength and weaknesses. That way, teachers sought to seek relevant assistance. Networking with other educators came up as an important aspect of learning. Teachers need to read, search for more information about the topic they are about to teach and fully prepare themselves with all the available resources before they go to class. Using modern sources of information like the internet came out as important. Teachers, especially the elderly, need to train themselves in using modern technology. They need to refrain from looking down upon themselves and start thinking highly and positively of their career and believe in themselves. With no doubt, personal mastery need to be encouraged. That way, their confidence would be

boosted and their enthusiasm improved. It came up that there was an urgent need that more teachers be employed so that reasonable load is distributed among the teachers. That way, the quality of teaching would be improved.

Wood and Olivier (2008) suggest the importance of self-efficacy among teachers, where teachers believe in their capabilities to successfully organise and execute their duties in a particular teaching context. Self-efficacy is categorically related to effort put by teachers to motivate and improve themselves. Larrivee (2000) attests that teachers engaging in critical self-reflection are likely to achieve at their best performance. By being critically reflective, teachers would be able to consciously consider moral and ethical implications of their teaching and the effects thereof on learners.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the research findings. The findings presented in this chapter illustrate that there are a number of factors influencing the competencies of teachers. For example, teachers are overloaded. There was also the belief that teachers were losing more time addressing too much paper work than the teaching itself, which eventually affected their competencies as it is measured through learner achievement. On top of the administrative duties that come with the ever-changing curriculum, teachers were burdened with duties that are beyond their teaching capabilities, like taking care of the school premises, dealing with delinquent and ill-behaved learners, dealing with learners with learning difficulties and others. It also emerged that motivation by Principals is lacking. Teachers viewed the Principals as adopting autocratic leadership styles, whereas they (the Principals) viewed themselves as instructional and democratic leaders. A need for Principals to put monitoring systems in place was apparent. In the next chapter, the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises and draws conclusions and recommendations about the study. The conclusions and recommendations have been reached in the light of findings. It is essential to reiterate that the aim of this study to find out what teachers say about their (in) competence. Prior to discussing these, below is a summary of the study.

5.2 Summary

The study sought to investigate the perspectives on the (in) competencies of teachers in primary schools in one circuit of the Zululand District. In order to achieve that, Chapter one introduced the study, highlighted the background, purpose, scope and significance of the study. Also, the research questions were displayed and the key concepts of the study were defined.

Chapter two reviewed the literature and found out key issues essential for the study the impact of the teacher-learner relationship on the competencies of teachers; how order and discipline affect the teachers' practice in class; commitment as an individual teacher's ability to identify with the goals and the values of a school; the influence of the understanding of subject content and the knowledge of effective teaching strategies on teacher competence; how teachers' workload and the availability of resources affect their competencies; holding teachers accountable for learner performance and the impact it has on their competencies; the effect of self-learning, reflective practice, professional development, mentoring, monitoring and support on teacher competence; the impact of formal training and qualifications on teachers' classroom practices; the extent to which human relations and working collaboratively in achieving common goals bear on the teachers' performance; teachers' beliefs

about themselves, their attitudes, emotions and beliefs about how pupils learn; how loss of professionalism coupled with loss of teacher prestige affect teacher competence, as well as the involvement of parents in the learning of their children and the impact it has on teacher competence. The chapter also highlighted the influence of instructional leaders on the competencies of teachers and how Principals and School Management Teams handle their responsibility to assist teachers to perform to their maximum best.

Chapter three deliberated on the research design and methodology. The discussion in the chapter indicated that this was a qualitative study, which was a multiple-case study involving three schools. It was also indicated that data generation methods in this study involved interviews and focus groups as the main data generation instruments, together with observations and document analysis. In chapter four, the findings of the study we divided into three sections and presented according to the main themes and sub-themes. The main themes emanated from the research questions outlined in Chapter one. Therefore, in chapter four, the main themes discussed included the perspectives on teacher (in) competence, factors demotivating and how teacher competence might be enhanced. The discussion was drawn from what the participants said, analysing that and discussing it by way of direct quotations. Based on these findings, the following conclusions are made.

5.3 Conclusions

Through the interviews, it was found that very few educators indicated to have chosen the teaching profession because they had the love for children and the profession itself, but most of the participants said they were forced into teaching by the circumstances. So, out of this finding, it can be concluded that because of the massive challenges that teachers come across in their teaching career, the teaching morale and the love of the profession are crippled, resulting in incompetence. It is even worse for those individuals who took teaching as their fall back profession, as they seek refuge in either adopting an “I don’t care attitude” or exit the system.

It was also found out that the overall picture painted by the teachers during the interviews was that they were doing very well. Ironically, the findings of this and the previous studies indicated that learners continue to perform poorly in ANAs, the assessments that serve as yardsticks for primary school teachers' performance and also in other local and international assessments. This pointed largely to (in) competence of primary school teachers. Out of this, one can argue that the teachers did not want to acknowledge and accept the problem of poor learner performance as largely pointing to them, but assigned it to other factors.

Discovering that the intermediate phase was not doing well in common assessments revealed the inadequacy in the laying of the good foundation in the initial grades like grade R. The findings also revealed that the little support that was given to the grade R teachers by the Department also contributed to them not being able to adequately prepare the grade R learners for formal education. Finding out that learner performance in School Based Assessments (SBAs) was so good when compared to performance in common assessments showed that the combination of factors contributed to such performance. One of the factors being that questions set internally sometimes failed to meet the required standard as some of the SMT members had no clear understanding of what to look for when moderating questions in specific subjects. It can therefore be concluded that pre and post- moderation of questions by the SMT was sometimes not done accordingly due to the reason that Primary school HoDs were allocated according to phases and not subjects. In that manner, some HoDs lacked the knowledge of subject specifics and the cognitive skills to be covered in those subjects.

It was also discovered that after three years of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) implementation, the teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Phases were still experiencing challenges in mastering CAPS. To add to that finding, it was found that though workshops on the said curriculum were conducted, teachers were reluctant to attend because they said some subject advisors have no clear or definite answers to the problems that they encounter during teaching and learning. Strangely so, what also transpired was that some teachers just do not take such

workshops seriously. One can therefore conclude that the teachers are expecting continued assistance with effective strategies to teach specific subjects and yet some are not willing to use the opportunities given to them to learn or engage in self-teaching because over and above the workshops, teachers should possess that inner drive to seek more knowledge concerning the curriculum and related issues in order to up their level of competence.

Some teachers were not comfortable in using English as we proceeded with interviews. The researcher thus concluded that proficiency in the Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT) that is not a mother tongue, could be a barrier to good teaching, as well as learner performance. This stems from the fact that the teachers themselves were having trouble in using the LOLT. So that compels them to eventually resort to code switching during lesson presentations, thereby creating problems with the learners who are dependable. Another finding was that, as much as the teachers were supportive of the inclusive education and were to a large extent sensitive to the diverse needs of learners and respected the right to equal treatment for all, inclusive education demanded them to implement programmes relevant to the learners' needs. It can therefore be argued that although the teachers were willing to assist learners with learning barriers, they felt incompetent as they had little or no knowledge of the relevant programmes.

One other finding was that non – cooperation of teachers was perpetuated by the Principals and SMT members who were not transparent as they often left out teachers from every important decision taken. The Principal's role in influencing teachers' behaviour by involving them in decision making was found as crucial, as it enables teachers to see themselves as part of the team. An appreciation by managers seem to encourage teachers to work even harder. It was found that such acts have a tendency of escalating divisions and tension among the teachers, thus making the school such an unpleasant place to be. This also hinders networking and team teaching in the school and leads to teacher absenteeism. The researcher's conclusion is that Principals or SMT members who are employing the top-down approach leave

teachers frustrated and aggrieved. Such resentment leads to uncooperativeness and arrogance, leading to loss of teacher prestige.

It was also found that the Department of Education has a tendency of ignoring curricular needs of a school when employing teachers on a new post or when substituting post in primary schools. When teachers arrive at a school, they are just given any subjects to teach, ignoring the subjects and the phases for which they were trained to teach. Sometimes the teachers are teaching all the subjects even in the intermediate and senior phases. Based on this matter, it is therefore clear that in primary schools, teachers are in most cases not given the liberty to teach the subjects that they are comfortable with, following the notion that there is no specialisation in primary school. That results in teachers producing poor results. It was also discovered that the Department of Education failed to provide all the schools with support staff in order to ease the load that does not form part of teachers' job description. The researcher's conclusion in this regard is that such duties like administrative, maintenance and security duties, in a way distract the teachers and interfere with their level of competence.

It was discovered from the teachers' responses and observation that there are multiple and complex factors contributing to teachers' stressful experiences with overcrowded classrooms. These factors included the lack of support from the management, as well as the lack of resources. Teachers felt like there was no guidance received in this regard, especially from the Principals' side. The concern voiced out again in this issue of overcrowding was that a challenged learner demanded so much attention, yet no allowance in the prescribed class sizes was made by the Department of Education. Also changes like that of curriculum and policy of redeployment instituted with no proper preparation and training, exerted a lot of pressure in teachers and contributed to frustrations and fears of being moved, while those remaining tend to struggle with massive duty loads and overcrowding. Due to this process of redeployment, sometimes teachers end up teaching multi-grades because the situation would have deteriorated to such an extent where classes are more than the number of teachers at school. One can therefore conclude that overcrowding promotes non

cooperativeness and ill-behaviour in learners and this often eventually negatively impacts on teacher competence. It can also be concluded that continuous curriculum changes and the movement of teachers had a lot to do with teachers' uncertainty and deteriorated confidence.

It was also discovered that some teachers are defying the non-negotiables of the teaching career and get away with it by hiding behind their unions. Non-negotiables refer to meaning of being fully prepared, teaching, assessing and giving feedback to learners on time, doing remedial exercises with learners, being always at learners' disposal during contact time. In most cases, the teachers always put their needs first before the needs of their learners, which often results in the high rate of teacher absenteeism. One can argue that there is failure on the part of the Department to hold teachers accountable for abandoning classes, while teacher unions should be held accountable for being unable to lead the teaching staff in a consistent manner and by letting them abandon classes and neglect learners as they regularly hold meetings during school hours.

The poor work ethics of learners were seen as a discipline problem that has an impact in the competencies of the teachers. The abolishment of the corporal punishment was seen as perpetuating ill behaviour and the use of alternatives to corporal punishment proved ineffective. Findings also showed that parents were distancing themselves from disciplining their children. This simply meant that the required balance between the teacher, the parent and the learner would not be achieved. Through document analysis, it was found that many learners did not even complete their tasks and projects. It was therefore concluded that most learners do not rise up to the challenges put forward through learning, which is a huge challenge for the teachers, who in many instances, simply accept that these learners have no aspirations for academic success. It can therefore be argued that teachers are feeling trapped and unsupported by the parents and the Department, of which these two stakeholders demand quality results at the end of the term, despite all the challenges and the criticism. Teachers' morale has thus deteriorated, leading to most teachers losing faith in their profession.

Other findings were that self-development starts from within. If teachers were to maintain life-long learner status, they need to know their weaknesses and strengths, thus, a willingness to learn and to be developed. Self-reflection and networking was established as capacitating. It was discovered that technology has changed, therefore the demand for teachers to catch up with the latest development so that they are well equipped for the e-learning of the 21st century. The conclusion around this issue is that teachers need to be up to date with matters that involve them, so that they are ready to work in any given situation. Nevertheless, it was established that many schools have not yet attained adequate resources. The Principals expressed that the Department was unwilling to grant section 21 with full functions to all the schools, which hindered prioritisation and the procurement of needed resources.

5.4 Recommendations

Serving teachers, including the grade R practitioners, needs to undergo ongoing and intensive training on new developments of the curriculum and the subjects that they teach so that their teaching is effective. The Principals of the schools, while working together with the Foundation Phase HoDs, need to pay more attention and acquaint themselves with the grade R curriculum. That would enable them to identify discrepancies early in the beginning of a learner's school career, thereby seeking and giving proper assistance and support to teachers concerned, before gross damage is incurred.

Regular SMT meetings are recommended in order to promote sound professional development and team building. They need to look at the ways of assisting teachers with curriculum related matters so that more time can be given to teaching. Subject advisors need to be ahead and be fully knowledgeable about the content, as well as the effective strategies of teaching subjects concerned. Proficiency tests after workshops or trainings should be considered. That way, teachers would strive to take workshops and trainings seriously, improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills, thereby doing well in the subjects they teach. There is a need for the establishment of

networks and Professional Learning Communities within the schools and the ward, the circuit management centre, the districts and the national level, with an objective of sharing knowledge concerning their teaching career. Such networks would assist teachers, HoDs and Principals to share their challenges and experiences in order to find informed solutions.

Learners' ability to understand instruction and to achieve the best of their ability is dependent on their verbal, reading and comprehending capabilities. So, it is recommended that teachers in primary schools work towards mastering language skills of the Language of Teaching and Learning themselves first, such that they can be able to pass them to the learners. The Department needs to look deep into the issue of Language of Teaching and Learning being foreign to teachers and learners. Meanwhile, teachers need to engage on self-regulatory learning to improve their language proficiency. Teacher development on self-reflection and self-efficacy is also crucial. A teacher with self-efficacy perceives herself and is perceived by others as effective, competent, capable and as a role model for her colleagues and learners. In that way, teachers would regain confidence in their teaching profession and reclaim the prestige they enjoyed years back.

SMTs need to be trained on the important aspects to observe when they are doing pre- and post-moderation. District officials who are subject specialists, examiners of the department, as well as the external examiners, need to work together to plan and institute workshops for SMTs in the issue of setting balanced, reliable and valid question papers. Through mentoring and support, teachers, especially the novice ones, need to be developed by well capacitated SMT members on setting a balanced, standardised assessment task that display all cognitive levels required by the subject. Teachers need to be honest with themselves and determine what their area of weaknesses are. By so doing, they would see the need to engage in Professional Learning Communities in order to come up with ways of mastering subject concerned. In-service training is crucial to keep teachers up to date with the current approaches and strategies pertaining to teaching and learning. The District officials need to be organised to render support as per schools' need and issues pertaining to curriculum

implementation. Relevant qualification when employing teachers in primary schools need to be taken into cognisance

It is recommended that Principals undergo more management workshops in order to acquire more management skills required for effective school management. Also, Principals need to enrol on Leadership and Management courses just to enhance their knowledge in terms of effective management and administration of their schools. By so doing, they would learn of the variety of leadership styles that are required for leading effective teachers and thus, effective schools. Employing principles of collegiality can assist the Principals to involve teachers in important decisions taken in the school, so that teachers become part of working towards realising common goals and the vision of the school. Being involved in decision making can instil a sense of responsibility and a sense of ownership in the teachers. Principals need to organise and engage teachers in regular staff developments to acquaint teachers with relevant policies and procedures and encourage self-reflection.

The Department needs to find ways of engaging teachers in decisions that affect them, like that of the changing of policies and the curriculum. That would prompt teachers to spearhead the change anticipated as they were involved in its initial stages. Policy makers need to take cognisance of how teachers experience and understand policy changes. In the same way, Principals also need to engage and prepare their teachers on changes anticipated by arranging intensive trainings and discussions before implementation. The Department needs to review and amend the process of redeployment of teachers, especially if the process would result in teachers teaching multi-grades. Teachers teaching under such conditions need support from the SMT to the district officials. Developments on how to manage such classes is imperative.

The assumption that there is a standard classroom situation is a fallacy. Teaching and learning should cater for pupils' diverse needs. Teachers need to view the quality of teaching and learning in terms of its effectiveness. Through self-regulatory learning, teachers need to find effective ways of assisting learners with learning challenges. District officials from Special Needs Education Services (SNES) component, need to

organise ongoing in-service trainings in order to capacitate teachers and SMTs with programmes of helping learners with challenges. Principals also need to ensure the existence and functionality of the Institution Based Support Teams (IBST) in the school. For over-crowding, it is recommended that teachers consider team planning and team teaching which may reduce stress as a result of increased duty load. The SMT together with teachers, especially those with overcrowded classrooms, can do a priority list together with clear timelines of achieving those priorities. The Department needs to strengthen and exercise strict control of admission measures and procedures such that Principals refrain from admitting learners over and above the capacity of the school if there are nearby schools. The Department needs to review the prescribed class sizes to allow for individualised teaching towards assisting learners with challenges.

The Department of Education should frequently host effective discipline management workshops to equip teachers and SMTs. Enforcement of strict disciplinary measures on learners would restore confidence in teachers and let them go beyond the call of duty in providing quality education. Teachers should familiarise themselves with appropriate behaviour theories that offer explanations on certain behaviours and management strategies of such behaviours. The SMT, together with teachers, need to arrange motivational sessions with the learners in order to engage them on the importance of their right to learn that goes hand in hand with responsibilities. Teaching or leadership styles of educators are also significant in learner discipline. Authoritative educators become involved in their learners' emotional and academic lives and are able to display warmth and affection towards them (Kheswa, Sandlana & Kwabutana, 2014, p. 268). So, teachers need to be empowered on the use of a variety of leadership styles that would emphasise the values and morality in their learners.

With regards to parental involvement, there is a need to organise workshops and seminars for parents on the importance of parental participation in the education of their children. Schools need to plan more parents' day with lucrative items on the programme in order to attract more parents. To instil learner discipline, SGB, parents and teachers need to come together and constitute an action committee that would

help in disciplining the ill-behaved learners. To assist teachers, parents need to be more hands on when it comes to disciplining their children. The Department needs to look deep into the conditions under which teachers are working, where they are afraid of learners they are teaching and the communities they are serving. The Department needs to employ support staff more importantly security guards for each and every school, to tighten security. Department's investment in infrastructure development in rural schools is imperative. The Department needs to create more enabling conditions for the previously disadvantaged schools such that they are adequately resourced in terms of physical and human resources. It is recommended that the Department grants Section 21 status with full functions to all schools in order to allow Principals to procure resources needed by their schools.

There is a need for unions to lead with consistence and refrain from protecting teachers who are irresponsible and abusing their rights at the expense of learners. Principals need to implement relevant policies to hold teachers accountable for neglecting learners during school hours and for poor performance. Lastly, living and working in the world of the advancing information and technology, it is recommended that teachers enrol with institutions that would enhance their technological skills. That would put them in better positions to acquire new knowledge and skills.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

Individual face-to-face interview with the school Principal

- A date for the interview will be agreed upon. This will preferably be over weekends or holidays.
- I will explain to the participant what to expect during the course of the interview session.
- The session will be for the duration of 45 – 60 minutes.
- Voice recording will be used as evidence.

A. Background information

1. How long have you been a Principal?
2. How many staff members do you manage?

B. Principal's leadership and management experience.

B1. School Vision and mission statement

3. Can you relate the mission and vision of your school?
 - How do you ensure that each staff member in your institution owns the mission and vision of your school?
 - As a leader how do you determine the direction the school takes?
 - How do you create a learning school that is a school with valued culture of teaching and learning?

B2. Teacher competence

4. How can you rate teacher competences in this school?
 - As a Principals you are accountable for quality teaching and learning in your school, how do you ensure that teachers in your school perform to their maximum best?

- What seems to pose a serious threat to their quality performance?
- How do you as a Principal encourage a learning school with a constant culture of teaching and learning?

B3. Factors affecting teaching practise

5. Duty load has been identified as one of the causes of stress to educators, how do you ensure that teachers' duty load is distributed accordingly?
 - How do you deal with a challenge of allocating subjects to teachers with little or no training on a specific subject?
 - How does that affect competence of teacher concerned?
 - How in your experience has change impacted on teachers' competence?
 - What do you think can be done to assist teachers to be managers of change in your school?

B4. Teacher motivation

6. How do you acknowledge and further motivate good teacher performance in this school?
 - What impact does that acknowledgement have on teachers and the way they perform?
 - How are teachers in this school professionally developed?
 - How do you encourage teacher self-reflection and accountability in this school?

C. Face to face Focus group Interview with the HODs

C1. Background information.

1. How long have you been an HOD?
2. How many teachers are in your department?
3. What gender dominates your department?

C2. HODs Management Experience and teacher competence

4. How competent are teachers in your phase in what they are expected to do?
 - What challenges do you encounter in this regard?
 - How do you manage such challenges?
 - How do you partake in creating a learning school?
 - In your experience how do you ensure accountability of teachers in your phase?

C3. Factors affecting teaching practise

5. Duty load has been identified as one of the causes of stress to educators, tell me about the challenges you encounter during the distribution of teachers duty load in this phase?
 - How do you deal with these challenges such that all parties concerned are satisfied?
 - How does that affect competence of teacher concerned?
 - Tell me more about factors that challenge competence of teachers in your phase.

C4. Teacher motivation and professional development

6. How do you acknowledge and further motivate good teacher performance in your phase?
 - What impact does that acknowledgement have on teachers and the way they perform?
 - How are teachers in this phase professionally developed?
 - How do you encourage teacher self-reflection and accountability in your phase?

Face to face Focus group Interviews with Educators

D1. Background information

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. Why did you choose teaching as a profession?
3. What grade are you teaching?

D2. Teacher competence

4. In your experience, how can you rate your competence in what you are expected to do?
 - How do you manage effective teaching and learning in your class?
 - How are class-rules a useful tool in transferring knowledge and skills to your learners?
 - How does teacher-learner relationship influence your competent skills?

D3. Factors affecting teaching practise

5. Duty load has been identified as one of the causes of stress to educators, what challenges do you encounter when duty load is distributed?
 - How does that affect competence of teacher concerned?
 - What seem to be your coping strategies?
 - Tell me more about other factors that challenge your competence.

D4. Teacher professional development and motivation

6. In your view how does teacher training assist you in attaining what is expected of you?
 - Explain what your perception is about professional development?
 - How is your work acknowledged and motivated?

- How do you motivate yourself to achieve what is expected of you?
- How do you hold yourself accountable for your performance?

APPENDIX B**Observation schedule.**

Event observed	Area of focus
1. Phase/staff meetings	Participation and co-operation of educators.
2. Classroom activity	Order and discipline
3. Grounds duties and pastoral care	Participation of educators, management and monitoring by SMT.
4. Extra-mural activities	Engagement and monitoring by educators

APPENDIX C**Document Analysis**

Type of document	Area of focus
1. Educators attendance register	Attendance of teachers.
2. Educator leave register	Frequency of absenteeism
3. Teaching plans	Implementation of the current CAPS. Curriculum coverage
4. Records of assessment	Assessment.
5. Analysis of results	Identification of problem areas.
6. Academic improvement plans	Improving performance.

APPENDIX D

Informed consent

18 Maidenhead Gardens
New Germany
3610
25 February 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY

“Perspectives on teacher (in) competence: Primary School teachers’ voices”

My name is Angeline Fikile Mfeka a Master of Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus. To meet the requirements of my degree, I am required to conduct research.

The study seeks to understand the perspectives of teacher (in) competence in primary schools. I request to interview SMT and Educators. Interviews will be two sessions on different days Interviews will take an hour on the day that will suit you. Your participation is voluntary. If at any time you wish to withdraw your permission for the use of this data, you can do that without any objections. However I don't intend any discomfort or any harm on your part. Your school was randomly selected on basis of accessibility. In my data analysis pseudonyms will be used in order to keep your identity anonymous.

The findings of this study might assist teachers to better cope with the level of competence required to improve learner performance and quality thereof in primary

schools. This may contribute in maintaining quality assurance in our schools. There are no costs or payments involved. I request to tape you during the interviews. Your responses will be confidential. Data will be kept in a locked cupboard for 5 years. Scripts will be shredded and tapes will be incinerated.

For Further information on this research and project please contact my supervisor, Professor V. Chikoko at 031 260 2639. Email: chikokov@ukzn.ac.za.

If you agree to participate in this study please sign the declaration below.

Your positive response is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Angeline Fikile Mfeka (Mrs)

082 474 6601

Email: fikile.mfeka04@gmail.com

I _____ (full names of the participant) hereby, confirm that I have read and understood the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I consent to participate in the project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw at any stage should I wish to do so.

Signature of the participant

Date

APPENDIX E

Sizonqoba Public Primary School

P O Box

Ulundi

3838

15 May 2015

Dear UKZN HSSRE Committee

Mrs Angeline Fikile Mfeka is a Principal at Thengisangaye Public Primary School. She will be conducting her Master's Thesis project, exploring the perspectives on teachers' (in) competence in primary school.

I am aware that her project involves a case study where interviews and observations in classroom setting and meetings are conducted. I understand that the study involves the collection of data from school records (i.e. samples of Lesson Plans, Annual Teaching Plans, and Assessment Records). Such records will be provided to the researcher in a de-identified manner, such that data cannot be traced to a particular participant.

I support these planned activities which involve normal classroom activities and curricular content.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

[First & Last Name]

[Designation]



education

Department: Education **PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane Tel: 033 392 1004 Ref.:2/4/8/441

Mrs AF Mfeka
18 Maidenhead Gardens
NEW GERMANY
3610

Dear Mrs Mfeka

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER (IN) COMPETENCE: PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS’ VOICES**”, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 June 2015 to 31 July 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu- Natal Department of Education.
Zululand District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 09 June 2015

Objectives or task / (in) complete			
5	3	1	2
		above	below
1	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source		2
2	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<	1
3	Muijs, Daniel Leonidas Kyriakides, Greefje van der Werf, Bert Creemers, Helen Timperley and Lorna Earl "State of the art – teacher effectiveness and professional learning", School Effectiveness and School Improvement 2014. Publication	<	1
4	www.dpu.dk Internet Source	< %	1
5	Submitted to Embury Institute for Teacher Education Student Paper	< %	1
6	www.section27.org.za Internet Source	<	1
7	Mampane P. M. "THE TEACHER TURNOVER CRISIS: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA", Business Education &	<	1